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VACATION
RAMBLES AND THOUGHTS.



VACATION
RAMBLES AND THOUGHTS;

COMPRISING THE

Recollections of Three Continental Tours,

IN THE VACATIONS OF 1841, 1842, AND 1843.



BY T. N. TALFOURD, D.C.L.

SERJEANT-AT-LAW.

—“ All in the broad highway of the world.”—WORDSWORTH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PART II.—CONTINUED.

CHAPTER IV.

GLIMPSE OF ITALY.

Journey to Colico—Lake of Como—Varennà—Lecco—Como—
Journey arrested—Lugano—Bellinzona.

THE dawn of Friday, 26th August, did not flatter our sunny hopes; it was cold and misty, with gusts of rain, and the scenery through which we passed was barren and stern. Our road lay through black rocky eminences; at one part assuming, on each side, the forms of mighty skeletons of mountains;—with hollows amid narrow ridges stretching from the background mass, like the edges which inclose the huge coves beneath the summit of Helwellyn, or the mightier basins of Snowdon; in one of which a huge mass of mist sat enthroned as a gigantic spirit in his chair, and remained with an almost frightful per-

tinacity, while the gentler clouds were vanishing under the influence of the ascending sun. We left it there, and proceeded by the side of a small black lake, until the great lake of Como appeared through the hills; and, by the time we had reached its head at Colico, all was dry and glowing on earth, and the sun was alone in heaven. Huge yellow flowers spangled the marshes; creeping and climbing vegetation perplexed the hedges; and lizards glimmering along every dwarf bit of wall, and peering out of every hole in the bank, almost lined the path with life. We felt now that we were in Italy; and sitting on a roadside wall, and watching the lizards at their play, indulged the appropriate sense of careless lassitude, and willing submission to the absolute power of our destiny, while its master and ours refreshed himself and the horses. The journey along the margin of the lake soon glowed into luxuriant beauty, while its head, buried in rocky mountains, reminded me of the Scotch sea-lochs, where, like Loch Goil, they run into, and almost under, their grotesque head-crags; the side on which our path lay was all of a sunnier—I will not say a happier clime. There, too, the rock often stretched out its ponderous tusks before us into the deep blue water; but had been blasted for the road, which

ran through gallery after gallery—bright tunnels, which might have connected Aladdin's subterraneous gardens with the outward crust of the world. Through their arched openings the vast blue water was seen, if not in perfect combination, in most glorious contrast; while every fold in the hills opening fan-like, and every dark gulley which furrowed them, was garlanded with the vine; here not in stunted independence, but in its own affectionate embracing nature, clasping the rock or the trellis, and exuberant with bunches of grapes, already black, redolent of infant and innocent Bacchus. Winding along this enchanted shore, we reached Varenna, where we stopped to dine at a charming inn, and where our sense of luxury was sated. It was the hottest part of the day; we were in a large back chamber, looking down on the lake, now of fervid blue, and across it to lofty mountains, the dusky simplicity of whose bare summits and breasts rendered the vast growth of noble trees, and luxuriant underwood which clothed their feet, and the bounteous vines just beneath us, more charming. A little beyond Varenna the lake divides into two branches; that on our side terminating at Lecco; that opposite in Como, with the bright promontory of Bellagio between; so that while one branch of the lake

feasted the eye, the other gave scope for the fancy to follow it through long lucid reaches, or to deck it with happy islands. And see ! as we gaze, a boat partly covered with a crimson awning, rowed by eight youths in white jackets, glides from beneath the glittering foliage beneath us, and skims along the lake, disturbing the expanse of blue with gayer colour, and peopling its solitude with joy. All within accords with the prospect ; the wainscots are painted in rich but delicate colours ; the floors are tessellated ; aromatic shrubs perfume the landing-places ; the jugs have the shapes of antique vases ; all breathing of a purely ornamental life. Action here seems impossible, — suffering a mere variety of sensation — one has nothing to do but to be, and to be is to enjoy. Dinner did not dissipate the illusion ; and a bottle of very good red hermitage heightened and prolonged it. We had proposed to reach Como in the evening ; but as we were unable to cross the lake with our carriage, and were, therefore, obliged to follow it to its point at Lecco, and thence to cross the country to the foot of the other branch at Como, the journey would be a long day's work ; and we learned from our host of Chiavenna, who interpreted between us and our driver, that the potentate could not or would not do it, and that

we *must* sleep at Lecco. We obeyed of course ; and, after another deliciously hot drive along the margin of the lake, arrived at the extremity of its Lecco branch early in the evening.

Lecco is a dirty town, with dark narrow streets ; but how “free and easy” life seemed to be in them ! At sunset all its population was abroad—not in the meadows, but in the streets—all disporting themselves after their own whim (you cannot call it *will*)—the young as if the world contained no schoolmaster ; the old as if it owned no empire of opinion ; some lounging on benches drinking lemonade or light wine ; some playing cards at low tables placed across the gutters, with hands and cards equally dark ; but no drunkenness, no riot, no ill-humour was seen amidst that dirty, careless race. But the most marvellous thing to me was the extreme vivacity and variety of colour which flashed, and glistened, and deepened, and harmonised in the motley scene. If the vagabonds had all engaged to contribute some bit of colour to the picture, they could not have produced more vivid effects than those which the instinct of their nature shed on their apparel and grouping. No matter whether young or old, shapely or deformed, in decent attire or in rags, all tended to the picturesque ; a light-blue cap, a crimson jacket, a scarlet cloak, a green handkerchief, a bunch of ribands,

some bright streak flashed gladness on the scene, wherever you glanced, independent of the clear olive-complexion, and merry black eyes which beamed out among the vagrant crowds. Indoors this love of colour was more elaborately exerted; our inn rooms were all painted in compartments—walls, ceilings, floor; we had fallen on a coloured world, where “motley’s your only wear.” And surely here the poet’s advice—“*Ne crede Colori*,” will be given in vain. Colour, in truth, is the most trustworthy of all appearances; it cannot deceive you; for all that it seems it is; and unless we have “the inky cloak” on our spirits, we need know nothing but “seems” while we enjoy it.

Our journey on the morning of 27th August, from one foot of the great lake at Lecco to the other at Como, though short, had the requisites of an epic poem—an adequate beginning, middle, and end—each distinct, yet all forming a complete whole. The beginning consists of a gradual development and perfect view of Lecco in a basin—almost urn—of rocky mountains, reminding me of that noble circlet amidst the highest Scotch hills, with a huge pulpit-like rock in its centre, which opens behind Ballahulish; its middle a succession of quiet green lanes, like those we enjoy in the midst of England, with views of two small,

unpretending lakes; its end a long, majestic, refulgent descent to Como, enthroned at the head of its own lake, here peopled with bright pleasure-boats, with a towering castle for its crown. We waited for some hours in this city while our passports were inspected and our horses refreshed, partly spent in a magnificent saloon at the hotel, where the enrichments of Italian taste were most lavishly employed; shaded from the blazing noon by curtains alternately scarlet and white, and balconied with a shrubbery of orange-trees and flowering myrtles; and partly in the cathedral, where mass was in the course of its celebration. This church, not remarkable in its exterior, standing amidst a crowd of houses, was "glorious within;" not so rich from its architectural grandeur, as from the felicitous combination and contrast of colour in its draperies. An immense curtain of crimson and gold floated behind the high altar; lemon-coloured draperies half shaded the upper windows, which softened and beautified the sunlight; purple velvet canopied the pulpit; crimson, yellow, and white, waved about the oratories or chapels; and yet, so happily were the hues combined or contrasted, that nothing seemed gaudy, or inconsistent with that modification of the devout feeling, which renders the

Catholic faith, as cherished on the South of the Alps, less *Christian* than *Marian*. The instinct of colour breaking out in all the appliances of life is felt here as well as in Lecco ; but its effects are not so remarkable in the luxurious city as among the half-witted, half-scapegrace population of the country town ; and the business of life, progressing here in decent shops, which involve something of a respectable tameness, checks the impulses of vanity, idleness, and grace. We should have been delighted to remain here till the next day, especially as large bills announced that the opera of "The Capulets and Montagus,"—terms which I presume include *Romeo and Juliet*,—would be represented in the evening. Beyond the pleasure of being in again within the precincts of the drama, there must have been a peculiar fascination in the enactment of that story of love and death, which our poet has invested with the atmosphere of its native Italy, in the climate which, faintly supplying the breath of genius, might dispose the spectator to the perception of love born and matured in a few hours ; of its brief intoxication excelling years of ordinary existence ; and of death as its luxurious triumph over separating power.

The arrangements, or rather the laws, of our

journey were inflexible ; and we started soon after noon for Lugano ; but an incident occurred, by way of a new variety among passport vexations, which nearly sent us back to Como and Juliet. Having passed a long avenue of plane-trees, suggesting an unexpected link of sympathy with our own smoke-canopied London, where they retain their greenness longer than any of their timber brethren, and having commenced the ascent of a long hill by a deep road embedded in vineyards, we were stopped at the barrier with the usual demand of passport ; it was obeyed without misgiving, for the document had been *viséd* only an hour before at Como, and therefore I thought must be right, especially as, if we were dangerous to the repose of Austria, she was about to be well rid of us. The delay seemed long ; at length, our coachman half ran, half staggered out of the office, quite chopfallen—his small brown eyes twinkling with tears ; his wide mouth twisting into all sorts of wry expression ; he pointed to the onward road and to us ; put his hand upon his waistcoat, and shook his head ; and then, as if he made our position quite intelligible, proceeded to remove our bags from the carriage. It was now time to seek explanation elsewhere ; and on inquiry within the office, which we had not before entered, we were informed

that *our* passport was perfectly correct; that *we* were quite at liberty to quit the dominions of the emperor with all our baggage, and with the carriage and horses if we chose to take them; but that our coachman must be left behind, as *he* had no passport at all, and ours would not serve him. The chief officer, however, who was very courteous, said he would not allow the driver to take the carriage and horses from us, but would find another driver, who should take us on with them, and restore them to the owner at Splugen; who, as he truly said, ought to have foreseen and provided for the exigency by obtaining a passport for his servant. I could not, however, leave our poor dumb coachman ("dumb to *us*," as the Ghost to Horatio) thus without his carriage, nor was I disposed to add to the calendar of causes in the Splugen department; and, therefore, I determined to pay him what might be rather more than just; to return to Como; to go to the Opera whither Juliet seemed to beckon me; and then, anticipating what I had reserved for another excursion, to go to Milan, and return by the Simplon instead of the St. Gothard Pass. I was puzzled, however, to find the means of arranging our accounts with the driver, and was about to ask the officer to be the interpreter, and if necessary the mediator

between us, when a young fellow in the office said to me in good English, "You had better send in the man to tell his own story; he'll manage it." I did so; and, in a very few minutes the man returned, jerking up his head with as much of merri-ment as his phlegmatic nature allowed; replaced the luggage; made signs to us to mount; cracked his whip in the face of some rustics who had witnessed his discomfiture; and resumed the reins and his authority over us. By what means he prevailed I knew not; our counsellor, who I suspect was an idle borderer on society, acquainted with the ways of the office, and catching any stray gift of fortune, came smirking up with an "*I told you so*," in a manner which implied an expectation of more than thanks, and took his back-handed *honorarium*, like the Nurse in the Drama we had forsaken; our banishment from that night's Verona was sealed: and we were again the creatures of our coachman.

We went on pleasantly through wood and vineyard, until the first view of the lake of Lugano burst upon us,—a great bit of intense blue between two dark hills clearly cutting it into a sharp angle, with the paler blue horizon beyond it. The picture was perfect in its kind; there were only two colours indicated,—blue and very dark green,—the

lake, the sky, and the slanting hills; the hills sloped as evenly as if they were the sides of an angle in Euclid; they were both equally dark; and except that the blue of the sky was much lighter than that of the water, there would scarcely have been a shade to interfere with the entireness of the two contrasted colours. We afterwards enjoyed glimpses of the lake through the woods, more complex in their beauty, till we reached its shore, and found we were to cross it at a ferry. At this prospect, our driver's inert nature was quickened into fear or repugnance; he seemed inclined to resist the boatmen who led the horses to the rude pier; and I began to doubt whether he would not insist on returning. The boatmen, however, soothed if they failed to convince him; and he doggedly took his stand in the boat, shrugging up his shoulders, and looking almost as stupidly wretched as when he was stopped at the barrier. We reached the town in safety; found it very dirty, notwithstanding its lovely lake; and very mean, in spite of the music of its name; and took up our quarters at a very ill-scented hostelry, bearing the heroic name of "The William Tell." We consoled ourselves, however, with warm baths, which we found just out of the town; and with a sail on the lake, almost too lovely to be recollected, except with

the dimness of a dream, in the twilight and starlight of a breathless evening.

Next morning, turning our steps again towards the Alps, we quitted Lugano at six o'clock, and, after a journey of four hours through a country the far greater part of which might be English, but for the lizards which gleamed about the hedgerows, and the last consisted of a noble descent through long reaches of wooded road into a huge mountain valley, reached Bellinzona, where we rested for the day. It was Sunday, and proved a day of delicious rest, although, being strangers to the language, and inexperienced in the rites of its worship, we did not hallow it with those solemnities which should consecrate and deepen the Sabbath's repose. This small city, one of the capitals of the canton of Tessin, and, therefore, though lying at the southern foot of the Alps, owning Swiss dominion, comprises within the small circuit of its immediate vicinity as much of interest and beauty as any town I have visited. Strong in situation, and most important in position (speaking in that warlike language which is beginning to be, happily, obsolete), it has been the object of many a bloody contest; and now presents the remains of no less than three fortresses, two in the lap of glowing vegetation,

and one cresting it. The central castle is still used as an arsenal, and its walls are those of the town, which is still bound in by walls and towers. Of the furthest castle I know nothing beyond the effect of its clustering turrets and strong iron-bound walls in the scene. The loftiest and the rudest was the object of our "preferable regards;" and we passed the larger part of our summer's day within the shade of its ruins. Having partaken of such a breakfast as four hours' travelling inspires and justifies—not, be sure, of tea and bread-and-butter only—and ordered our dinner at the strangely genteel hour of six o'clock, we proceeded to spend all the intervening wealth of time within the shadow of our selected castle. A narrow alley led from the town to the ascent of the hill, lying between two gardens or vineyards, and entirely canopied by vines trained over it, from which thousands of bunches of ripe black grapes hung down to tempt the touch—a bower of perhaps three hundred yards in length. Thence emerging, we found our way up the long hill—unshaded and sultry, at first, but soon clothed with noble trees—and scrambled, by right or by wrong, to the small platform of weed-woven brick and rock on which the ruins stand. From a narrow terrace—scarce more than a ledge fronting them—to which we

climbed, is a fine view of the two subject castles ; the walled city almost like a miniature, for you may walk from gate to gate in five minutes ; the long grey bridge over the Ticino ; the affluent country, backed by the lower roots of the Alps : but the silent, dismantled, desecrated tower itself was more interesting than all. It seemed to be used as a storehouse for agricultural produce and implements. The sickle had literally replaced the sword ; most of the ornaments had quite mouldered in dust ; but in one large room, used as a granary, was still a large mouldering fresco, which seemed to represent the story of Tell ; a small feature of which only seemed appropriate to the wild orchards which occupied the courts ; the archery was gone, but the apples flourish still. Beneath one of the old apple-trees which were scattered about in a Sicilian fruitfulness, we lay down, thinking of Wales and Scotland, and idly comparing their grandeur with Alpine scenes, and engaged with the thousand busy thoughts which people an idle day, till we fancied the hour of dinner had arrived, and slowly wended our way home. Beside our path, close to the entrance of the town, lay a snake, killed since we passed the spot, a beautiful reptile of at least four feet in length, of a pale lead colour—quite as harmless, I have

no doubt, when alive as now, but a victim to the ancient enmity between men and serpents; which does not, however, deprive their race of a certain strange interest, which compels ours to gaze on them, living or dead. We had some time yet; and walked round the outside of the old walls to see some boys rob a vineyard with a deliberation and boldness which would have done honour to Lord Eldon's childhood; placing stones in a stream which ran beneath the wall, and then hoisting a slender boy—like *Oliver Twist* in size, but more merry and less innocent—over it, who threw over huge bunches to them, and climbed back to share the spoil. They paid no attention to us, wisely considering we should not inform against them, but ran off, leaving some of the bunches behind them, when a party of very young soldiers—or, rather, citizens' sons under drill for soldiers—appeared under the command of two soldiers in uniform, trying to march. They were an awkward squad indeed; and two small embryo drummers, trying to make a noise, beat time and tune at once very merrily, notwithstanding a cuff they now and then received from their sergeant tutors. We dined excellently; and as we were to be called at four, to commence a very long day's journey up the Alpine Pass to Airolo, we went to bed at

the primitive hour of nine. Our goodnatured host made light of my regret that he should be disturbed so early, and told us we should have coffee before starting :—" At four I knock at your door ; at half-past four you descend ; you take your coffee in comfort ; at five you depart." And he kept his word, and we our time. We left him with regret, hoping to see him again some day, and meanwhile desirous to recommend to all our friends, whether they have just crossed the Alps or are about to cross them, to rest one day at Bellinzona beneath the wings of its *Eagle*.

CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO SWITZERLAND BY THE PASS OF
ST. GOTHARD, AND THENCE TO LONDON.

The Valley of the Ticino—Airolo—Falsehood of the Sentiment that the Feeling of creative Power predominates in wild Scenery rather than in the Harmonies of Nature—The Descent of the Reuss—Fluellen—Altdorf and Tell's Story—Church Decorations at Fluellen—The Lion of Lucerne—Rapid Return to Mannheim—The Theatre of Mannheim—Voyage down the Rhine—The Bubbles from the Brunnens v. English Education—Return to London—Remarks on the Tour.

WITH our departure from Bellinzona closed our glimpse of Italy; our faces were set towards Switzerland; and, but that our retrograde course proved our holiday to be waning, I should not have regretted the change; for the mountains are far dearer to me, even in mist and cloud, than the plains beneath the sunniest skies. We spent thirteen hours of the next day (29th of August) in mounting the valley of the Ticino, a river worthy the music of its name. From the point, a few miles from Bellinzona, where two great Alpine valleys diverge—one to the Pass of Bernardino, the other to that of St. Gothard—the ascent is almost continuous; at first very gentle;

then laborious ; then almost precipitous, unless it were rendered easy by the windings of the road ; generally a wide umbrageous vale, though sometimes, where steepest, contracted almost into a gully : but in all it is *majestic* ; better deserving of that particular epithet than any defile I have seen, even among the Alps. It is vast ; the hills on each side rising to a height of from three thousand to four thousand feet, but embraces not only rich shrubs and brushwood, but a succession of noble trees ; and its river, though “born so high” as the top of the Pass, is not of the glacier turbid, but spring-fed, and only owes to the snow the pale blue which just tinges without staining it. It is neither a rivulet nor a torrent, but a great body of pure living water, far larger than any river we had yet found among the mountains, which, tracing it upwards through its course of various beauties — rapids, cataracts, and cascades — we might fancy streamed from the skies. A little below Airolo it receives another river, which falls into it from a height forming a waterfall, which, even at the distance of half a mile, at which it is surveyed from the road, looks a fearful streak of white foam. Presently the mountains closed upon the road ; we passed an old Roman fortress just above it, simple and alone in its grandeur ;

then the valley extended again ; but “ the pomp of groves, and garniture of fields,” had given place to a wide mossy common, pierced by grey rocks ; and, turning up a short, steep ascent, between dingy stables and stable-looking houses, we stopped at a low, whitewashed, square-windowed house, like an old Highland inn, fronting the open part of the small town, and were told we had reached the end of our day’s journey. Hungry and tired, I was glad to hear it ; but, on looking back, I cannot call to mind any one day’s journey the scenes of which convey an impression at once so single and so perfect as this.

The rooms of the inn were chilly and dark ; but the cold was soon removed by a fire, and the darkness lightened by the attendance of two pretty *grisettes*, who spoke French and read novels. After dinner, I started out alone up the old road, the stones of which have been scattered by many storms, and which is neglected now for the new grand engineering work, which, after the manner of the Splugen, makes its sharp angles on the breast of a huge bare mountain. The good old way is still the pleasanter to stroll on ;—and afforded a perfect view of the solitary grandeurs of this far upland valley. All here is vast,—unadorned,—(for the scattered bushes, though bright-

ening the way-side, are mere dots in the prospect)—silent, except that the river far below is guessed by its softened gurgle. And here are other vestiges of Alpine nature; a vast mass of snow in an urn-like bed lies among mountains to the left; and tops capped with real *sunned* snow, not lying in nooks or clefts, in front—almost strangers to us throughout our journey, and, therefore, the more impressive. When I thought of twice passing the Alps, I expected to grow familiar with icy pinnacles; but I had seen till now little more of ice or snow than you may discern throughout the summer, streaking the great summit above Glencoe, or wreathed among the north-eastern declivities of Ben Nevis.

In the deep solitude of this our most Alpine hour, I felt my mind, instead of expanding with the scene, shrink and shiver within me; the awful description of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*—of his feeling in the enchanted ocean—"so lonely 'twas that God himself scarce seemed there to be," came upon my thought; and I was forced to project my mind into brighter scenes to cast off the "burthen of mystery" with which these huge forms of matter oppressed it. Surely it is a false application of a great sentiment to represent that, amidst the vast desolation of scenes like these,

the presence of creative and providential goodness is more vividly indicated than in the common pathway of life ; that an unhumbléd spirit finding Divinity nowhere else, must recognise it in these dumb fastnesses of nature ; or that the devout believer should feel himself more in the immediate presence of his Maker here than in the plain or the city. Such raptures,—if not misplaced at the sight of a vast chaos, like the cataract of Niagara, a world of water inevitably tumbling down from the sudden descent of its channel,—have no especial or peculiar propriety which should exclude equal consciousness of the Divine in livelier scenes. Surely it is not beneath the pinnacles of heights unvisited by human step ; in huge unpeopled solitudes ; in regions of ancient ruin and present desolation, that the mind more intensely perceives the workings of merciful Wisdom, than in the daily sunrise, the unfailing succession of seasons, the development of the humblest flower from its seed ; the smallest, faintest, commonest harmonies of the universe ! It is true that when the mind, at first overwhelmed by those huge inequalities which mark the ruins of centuries, finds relief in tracing out the beauty which everywhere gradually cleaves to them, and perceives a spirit of loveliness ever working to

clothe rude chasms with waving verdure, and sculpture out fair beds for the tortured torrents to rest in, it throws off the weight of stifling matter, and rejoices in its celestial relations. But there is more kindred with our heaven-ward thoughts, and, therefore, more living proofs of their divine source, in the humblest movement of the lowest intellect—in the infant's dawning smile—even in the instincts of animal affection, than in all these majestic tossings of the rind of the outer world. Within ourselves we may find the unerring witness to Him who moulded us, if we devoutly regard the depths of our own being; instead of being taught the cold lesson to "look through Nature up to Nature's God," strive to look out upon nature from Him; and rise towards heaven on the wings of faith and love, instead of trying to ascend by the ladder of natural history. If the proud philosopher who has crushed the sense of Deity beneath his selfishness and his scorn, finds it rising upon him in scenes like these, it is not because they supply suggestions with which every movement of his own mind, if wisely scanned, is more pregnant; but because here—alone in a tempest-riven wilderness of rock, the truth starts out upon him, and the depth of the solitude forces him to confess that Presence which alone peoples it.

Our longing after icy sublimities was not gratified in our morning passage of the Alps, which began almost in the dark, and was soon clouded by mist, and blinded by rain. At first, we walked up the zig-zag road before the horses, and after many dismal twistings, were refreshed by the sight of our old friend the Ticino, spanned by a noble arch; and crossing, saw its stream rolling, tumbling, foaming down a series of cascades, having all the beauty to itself, except where here and there it had quickened into verdure a small group of trees. The pelting rain drove us to take refuge in the carriage, but at every turn of the road we caught a glimpse of the strong-hearted river, diminished almost to a rivulet, but rioting in young power, leaping from chasm to chasm by our side. At the summit, in the rain and mist, we lost it—just at its source—and passing along a dismal plain, in which we saw nothing but a small stony-edged lake, began to descend by long slants over a desolate common. We soon found ourselves accompanied by another river—the infant Reuss—to which we were wedded for the course of its natural life; so we were scarcely “off with our old love” before we were “on with the new.” A little onward the village of Hospital came in view, crested by an old weather-stained tower, standing amidst a desolation which might have

satisfied "the lost Aspasia," without the sea-beach, but leading to a startlingly vivacious hotel with white walls and green windows. Here, having started at half-past five, and travelled four hours in mist and rain, we reckoned on stopping to breakfast, notwithstanding a mysterious warning which some discontented Englishman had written over the mantel-piece of the inn at Airolo—"Englishmen, beware the inn at Hospital; beware of the landlord; beware of his Lion." Quite ready to take evidence of the truth or falsehood of this libel, we made the most eloquent signals in our power to our coachman; but he first nodded his head like a mandarin, to show that he understood our wish, and then shook it, like Lord Burleigh, to indicate that he could not grant it. Why he was disinclined to refresh himself and the horses I could not guess, for I had no more means of penetrating his mind than that of the cat (if cats have minds), who lay as sleek and happy in one of the Lion's windows, as if she had not been 6000 feet above the sea. Whatever might be the motive, the action was unequivocal; he gave his whip a scornful crack, almost in the face of the libelled landlord, who stood beneath his own placid Lion with inviting looks, and whirled us on, looking back on the Alpine puss with envy. About two miles

further, a slender tower or spire—tower rather, tapering into a spire,—with its painted head, indicated the town of Andermatt; here, at all events, we hoped to stop—in vain; the head again shook, the whip again cracked; and very hungry, half angry, and half smiling, we passed two inviting hotels, and resigned ourselves to our fortune. The glen now contracted to a gully, scarcely wider than the *Via Mala* itself; and passing through a long cavern—hewn, or blasted through the rock—we descended by a road scarcely inferior to that glorious way, in its giddy magic, by the side of a river of far superior power to the Rhine, in that dark passage of its early life. The Reuss is a more powerful river even than the Ticino; far inferior in colour—being of a turbid brown instead of a lucid blue—but its colour as well befits its bed, which is channelled in brownish stone, sometimes so evenly cut by the water, as to wear the appearance of having been hewn by art, as that of the Ticino harmonises with its broad forest margin. As in the *Via Mala*, the road is carried repeatedly across the river, and by bridges even more stupendous; in one place by a bridge which looks down on a solemn spot, where the ancient bridge remains, unparapetted, now hoar with lichens and mosses, hanging above a twilight depth, in which the still

water scarcely glimmers—a master-piece of ancient daring and skill. To this bridge the Devil's name has been, as in similar cases of might, beauty, and terror, given ; why, it would be hard to conjecture ; unless, on the questionable authority of Milton, whose fallen angels construct the fatal bridge over Chaos, the Devil must be regarded as the first engineer, as well as the first whig. When the gully widened into a glen, the stern and savage character still prevailed ; though rich pastures bordered the river, the mountains were skirted with black firs ; and, though noontide was approaching, the clouds bent over all with congenial gloom. At last, in the widest part of the valley, our driver drew up at the door of a regularly Swiss-built wooden house—a perfect specimen of the Swiss rustic architecture—and made a sign, which we were ready enough to understand, that here we might satisfy our hunger. The place did not look very hopeful ; for pigs were rioting before the door, and the curtilage seemed neglected, as if from want of custom ; but we were greeted, on our entrance, by a fat, good-natured-looking hostess, whose husband, almost as fat and as genial, was eating broth out of a huge bowl ; while a trimly-dressed little girl, and a stout rosy boy, were engaged over smaller bowls, apparently in the same pleasant occupation.

On our return to the inn, our driver was smoking a long pipe at the door;—so we exhibited ourselves in a state of what Macbeth calls “manly readiness,”—that is, with great-coats on, and staffs in hand—looked at him till we were quite sure he saw us, and walked onward. He did not stir; so we sat down on a rock, almost as moveless as he, watching the course of a strong rivulet, which broke from a dark chasm, and rushed by many cascades to the river, and waited his pleasure. In about an hour more, we saw symptoms of motion; returned to the front of the inn; took another leave of its inmates, who seemed to have good-nature enough among them to sweeten the temper of any one given body of authors, artists, or players; and were soon once more on our way. Still we descended; the river sometimes sank many hundred feet below us, so that we could only trace its course by the black waving line of its sunken rocks; sometimes it rushed by our side: three great rounded mountains appeared in front of the basin into which we seemed tending; those on our sides rose up to great height, indicated occasionally by a touch of white; and the effect of the scenery became more and more oppressive. There was beauty in detail—sometimes exquisite beauty—in the dingles among which the river

often fell ; in the flowering pastures that swept down to the dark pillars of its channel ; in round clumps of trees among wastes of stones like islands ; but my mind could not rest on these in the presence of the black and grey masses, which prevailed in the contest between beauty and terror. At last, when we had nearly reached the level, where the mountains had threatened to imprison us, the road made a sudden turn, and all was changed as in the shifting of a scene ; for before us lay a bright, open plain, variegated with orchards, corn-fields and cottages, through which our river wound, but serene, broad, deep, and home-featured almost as our own rural Thames ; and on the right uprose a cluster of villas and hotels—all white, with pale-green windows, looking like an out-of-townish village—a place for pleasure, at a convenient distance from some thriving city. It was an unspeakable relief ; but the sun was declining ; and where was Altorf ? I tried to learn from my driver how far it was to Altorf. To my consternation, he shook his head, and pointed to the hills behind us. I knew nothing of the country ; *Murrayless*—having lost my “ Guide, Philosopher and Friend,” that is, “ my Murray,” in the Rhine steamer—and really began to wonder where we should find ourselves at nightfall. A lake dawned between the two hills

before us ; could it be other, I idly asked, than the Lake of Lucerne ? Again the head was shaken, and on we went, through an old, dull, faded street, of a melancholy-looking town. I tried to elicit its name ; I understood the oracle to answer “ Leila,” which puzzled me still more. My perplexity was soon over ; we approached the head of a lake, into which our river fell ; stopped at the door of a neat hostelry ; our journey was done—we were at Fluellen ; whither, and not to Altorf, I suppose our commander had been commissioned to bear us ; and we had just passed through Altorf, scarcely suspecting that we were on such heroic ground. There was nothing, to be sure, to identify it, as we did not observe the painted tower ; none of Knowles’s localities, which we had thought as real as his domestic pathos ; no rock ; no fortress ; no city gate ; no icy pinnacles ; only a huge, fair, lifeless village. Here we were, however, on the Lake of the Four Cantons ; our hour of manumission was come on this soil of liberty ; we hailed the genius of “ Universal Emancipation ;” we were free ! By the aid of the landlord, I settled with our discrowned despot, apparently to his satisfaction—certainly to mine—for when his hand closed on the last piece of money, and he grinned his thanks, I felt as I suppose Sinbad did, when the

Old Man of the Sea fell off his shoulders. Like other emancipated slaves, we began our course of freedom by a difference between ourselves—the important question being no less than whether we had dined or not. My companion insisted that our repast at the good Swiss house was breakfast; I that it was dinner. There was something to be said on both sides; so we gave ourselves the benefit of the doubt; ordered dinner; and strolled back on foot to see the famous Altorf. We there found some memorials of Tell, in rude inscriptions, and a gaudily painted tower, representing Gessler's atrocity on the spot where the boy is said to have sustained the apple for the shot; but confused with a strange mixture of allegory and fact, as if the fact was too shocking to be nakedly presented; and even the reality was made more gaudy than vivid. This celebrated story, notwithstanding the interest which genius has woven round it, is to me so painful—the act of the tyrant such a piece of mere base cruelty—the acquiescence of the father so questionable in feeling (especially as he had an arrow concealed, which he might as well have put to its right use before his shot as after it) and the result so unsatisfactory, leading directly to nothing but the renewed captivity of the archer—that I would rather take refuge in the hope “that

it is not true," than seek with avidity for its vestiges. At first sight, Altorf had the air of a small decayed town, from which trade had long departed; but as we examined it closer, it seemed as if no mere gradual change could have made it so desolate. We wished to purchase some small articles of dress; and searched it through and through to find a shop which might possibly supply us; but in vain. Clean; decorated with weather-stained inscriptions; ornamented with some good houses, half or wholly closed—it seemed rather like a burgh, from whence the inhabitants had been swept or frightened by some sudden calamity; for even the urchin race, who should be fostered by the example of little Tell—the true hero of the tale—and who seldom fail to enliven the streets, where there is any life, were wanting.

As the steam-boat did not quit Fluellen for Lucerne till two o'clock, we had a long morning in this little village, which was made more tedious by heavy and incessant rain. But my waking ears were charmed by a low music; which I found, on opening the window, to be that of the organ of the church, of which the slender spire rose over a flower-garden directly before me, and in which the villagers were assembled at early mass. The effect, mingling with that of the moist, mild air of the

morning, was inexpressibly solemn and sweet;—it seemed like the breath of all the simple goodness of the valley wafted in one expression. While I still listened, the congregation issued from the porch; but many of them, chiefly women and children, waited in the churchyard paths, which they lined with rows of bright-coloured umbrellas, until the priest, a tall and reverend-looking man, came out, and, although unprotected even by one of their frail coverings, stopped and shook hands and talked with several, apparently the mothers of the smaller flock;—the most pastoral specimen of a Catholic minister I have ever happened to see in his best aspect. We afterwards availed ourselves of the ever-open doors of the church—which might read a lesson to some of our Deans and Chapters—to examine its interior. It would be very handsome if it were not very gaudy—being covered, through ceiling, walls, and gallery, with paintings—the brightest being figures of the Twelve Apostles in front of the organ-loft, giving it too much the air of a theatrical orchestra, painted for some temporary occasion. A Protestant who respects, as he ought, the Roman Catholic faith, is apt to feel impatient of the taste which disturbs *his* Catholic meditations in the simple church, or even in the stupendous cathe-

dral, by the intermixture of paintings all flaunting with soulless cherubs, or dark with caricatures of physical suffering ; and still more when the idea of the Blessed Virgin is embodied in a tawdry doll, frocked in dirty muslin, bedizened with dull span-gles and bits of stained glass. But we forget that religion is not the concern only of people of expanded minds or delicate sensibilities ; that the untaught or ill-taught mind, which would only shiver back into its own littleness in the vastness of a pictureless cathedral, may be touched through these poor semblances, by pious affections ; and that the heart which might be callous to the pure sense of infinite love, may be softened into grateful worship by the frequent exhibition of physical agony. All these, the highest as well as the lowest, are but the aids and appliances by which poor human nature may trace and cleave to something of the everlasting and *unseen* ; and, therefore, it may be that these elaborate trifles, or these shocking representations, have as influential a power over the ignorance and weakness to which they are adapted, as that with which the noblest works of pious ages are imbued for him whose soul they raise to “temples not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

At two, we embarked in the steam-boat on the lake for Lucerne, in the midst of rain, which pre-

vented any fair appreciation of its beauties, and which entirely veiled the great feature of its vicinity—the fearful Mont Pilatus. Its loftier heights being invisible, I did not think its lower banks, though often of bold rock and always feathered with luxuriant wood, superior to the curving shores of Loch Lomond, or equal to those of Loch Awe, even as seen under similar disadvantages of mist and rain. We reached the Swan at Lucerne at six o'clock; found the Table d'Hôte had obligingly waited for the steamer; and met, to our agreeable surprise, the friends with whom we parted at Malines, still on their onward journey. By their advice we went early the next morning to see the Monument to the Swiss Guards who were cut to pieces in August, 1792, defending the royal family of France from the maddened republicans—the Lion of Lucerne and of the world. Although the situation is chosen with a noble daring—the open side of a bare rock, surmounting a still pool of dark water—and the circumstance of the sole figure being sculptured out of that rock arrests the attention of the spectator—yet situation, circumstance, material, all are nothing compared with the expression of the figure itself—the stricken and dying lion, grasping with its paw, as by instinct, more affecting as it has almost waned to mechanical,

the lily of the Bourbons. There is surely no image in stone or marble of stricken power and beautiful resignation — of fidelity imparting sweetness to death — of true heroic suffering, beyond relief but above despair, so eloquent as this ! We should say that it is superior to the occasion which prompted it, if such a work of genius were not truer than our theories. If I had not seen that patient and dying lion, I should have thought that, although no form of humanity, that has mastered the fear of death, can ever be without kindred with the heroic, its lowest attributes would suffice for mercenary soldiers, yielding up their lives in pursuance of their bargain with a foreign power ; but in the presence of this eloquent testimonial to the dead, I cannot help attributing to them some sympathy with the ancient greatness of the monarchy in whose service they fell ; investing their valour with a moral dignity, and their fate with a human interest, which no written history could give them.

After visiting this pathetic stone, we left Lucerne by the diligence for Berne, in pursuance of an improvident consent by which I had ordered letters to be sent thither, in the hope that we might find an “extra week” added to the Eton Holidays. We found, alas ! no extra week ; but we did not regret this episodial journey, since we

met, at "The Falcon," Sir Robert Inglis, who, with his lady, was just entering Switzerland. To meet Sir Robert Inglis in a foreign land is for any English heart to feel proud and happy; to mine it was to feel the distance of countries annihilated as the difference of parties was once in the serenest enjoyment of unselfish happiness; to rejoice in the sense of a home and homely feelings, of which no country on earth can find a truer representative. Although our interview with him lasted only a few minutes, it was, as his minutes often are, prolific of good; for he introduced us to his relative, Captain B——, who, like ourselves, was homeward bound, and whose company gladdened that great portion of our remaining journey in which he travelled with us. With him, we took the *diligence* at five on the following morning for Basle, travelling through the mighty pass called The Munster Thal—a pass descending through the ranges of the Jura by the side of a bright stream, embraced by lofty pine-clad hills, sometimes contracted almost to the span of the *Via Mala*, sometimes expanded into green amphitheatres floored with flowery turf; which will be better appreciated, however, on entering Switzerland than on leaving it. The coachman, after we had breakfasted at the foot of the first range, insisted on my

seeing the Pass, and almost pulled me up to share his seat, as I was about to enter the carriage; and seemed, while I occupied the elevation to which he raised me, to exult in my enjoyment of the gratification he had (I know not by what instinct or reason) selected me as worthy to enjoy. Our homeward progress was now rapid. We went the next day all the way from Basle to Mannheim—I should think at least two hundred miles, taking the railway to Strasburg; passing through that formidable scene of passports and *douanes*, without a hint of either, to the steamer, with scarcely time to cast one look of reverence on the mighty Minster; and then, by the united force of steam and current, after a long, happy voyage, which I beguiled partly with the conversation of the companion Sir Robert had given me, and partly in the perusal of the Bubbles from the Brun-nens, were landed at Mannheim at eight in the evening. A bill stuck up in the room of our old Hotel, informed us that there was an Opera; and deferring all other refreshment, we found our way into the pit of the theatre before the first act was over. The piece was *The Huguenots*, “a bloody piece of work;” which, though well performed in all its parts, had little charm for me, except that it had the form of a drama; but the house itself excited recollec-

tions of some of the greatest dramas ever acted ; and of the career of the loftiest and purest of all dramatists who have ever lived—Schiller,—whose first and many of whose best plays were produced in this narrow sphere. Here, in this small circle, his first—"The Robbers"—flashed upon the heart of Germany ! Was it possible to stand among the crowd of that pit, and not to thrill with the thought of the wonder, the enthusiasm, the intellectual joy of that great hour ? True, it was radiant with the triumphs of the production of early youth—of excited, perturbed, undirected youth—but of a youth whose first "wild and whirling words" were capable of startling the severe constancy of the wisest, and shaking the selfishness of the world. What must have been the sensation of a German audience, on the first representation of a work then warm from its author's heart, and first presented to the hearts of others, the perusal of which forms an era in the mental history of a thinker like Hazlitt, of a philosopher and poet like Coleridge ? What must have been the delight of its author, not long emancipated from the severities of a military education, to find his burning thoughts thus reflected back again from the minds of his countrymen ? And what must have been the gift of self-regulation, the heroic power of his spirit, which,

unseduced by such triumph, should so soon seek its approval, by more just and harmonious conceptions, from the severest wisdom!

Our next day was occupied by the long voyage from Mannheim to Cologne, commencing at six o'clock, and lasting till ten in the evening, our passage being rendered slower by the immense freight of Germans taken on board at various points, all proceeding to a great military fête at Cologne, including the King of Wirtemburgh and his enormous carriages. Seeking enjoyment for part of the time in continuing the perusal of Head's delightful work, imbued with additional interest by the neighbourhood of the scenes he so charmingly delineates, I was surprised and grieved to peruse his elaborate attack on classical learning, as the chief object of education at our great English schools, and on the studies of the university which follow it. The pretty exhibition of a school at the scene of "The Serpent's Bath,"—a name of odious fascination—seems to have awakened in his accomplished mind, an admiration for the Nassau system, at the expense of our own, which I lamented in proportion to my respect for our accuser. I was the less prepared for his enthusiasm of invective, because in an earlier part of his work he had expatiated with pride, so graceful in

his assumed character of an old man, on the symbols of moral and intellectual nobleness presented in the appearance of a party of young English collegians, specimens of the operation of the system which he deprecates—in comparison with that of their fellow-voyagers, who have been fashioned under that which he prefers.* Indeed, after having inveighed against the whole tenor of classical scholastic education, he admits “that in spite of all its disadvantages, a set of high-minded, noble-spirited young men eventually become an honour to their country,” but asserts, that “this is no proof that their early education had not done all in its power to prevent them.” I do not understand what other proof can be required or given; or why, while the fact exists, any apprehension should be entertained of the advance of other classes of society in branches of knowledge now within their sphere

* “As we proceeded up the Rhine, there issued from one of the old romantic castles we were passing, a party of young English lads, whose appearance (as soon as they came on board), did ample justice to their country; and comparing them while they walked the deck with the rest of their fellow-prisoners, I could not help fancying that I saw a determination in their step, a latent character in their attitudes, and a vigour in their young frames, which being interpreted, said—

‘We dare do all that may become a man,
Who dares do more is none.’

Besides these young collegians,” &c.

of opportunity, and the scope of their actual use. If, indeed, classical instruction taught no more than an intimate acquaintance with the dead languages, and a fine perception of the beauties of the greatest works of ancient genius, surely such results would not follow the devotion of a large portion of studious boyhood to its labours. It is not for these accomplishments chiefly that it is selected for the first place in education; it is because experience has shown it to afford the best means of training the young mind to patient, continuous, unruffled habits of toil—because the study of words, especially of exquisite words, is the best introduction to the knowledge of things—because it does *not*, in the first instance, apply to the faculty of unripe reason, which is better developed and strengthened when it can be exercised on knowledge already mastered, than when incited to try its unfledged energies amidst “worlds not realised;” but to strengthen the memory, to refine the taste, and to form the habit of obedient and cheerful toil. It is because the knowledge it communicates is *not* what is called “*useful*”—because it does *not* supply the scholar with some information at once to be brought into productive exercise, of which he may be “justly vain,” and with which he may rest contented—that

it is wisely presented, as a succession of difficulties to be surmounted by years of study, though cheered on the way by glimpses of the beautiful and sublime; disturbed by no controversial strifes; but giving to the labours of boyhood a harmony and a substance, and teaching at the same time, that there are higher and nobler things in life to be cherished than those which tend to its outward convenience and enrichment; nay, that there are things compared to which life itself, with all its utilities, is worthless. Our English Classic (for such unquestionably the author is) laments his own lot as having left a classical school at the age of fourteen—"Scarcely knowing the name of a single river in the new world—tired almost to death of the history of the Ilissus. In after life (he continues) I entered a river of America more than five times as broad as from Dover to Calais—and with respect to the Ilissus, which had received in my mind such distorted importance, I will only say, that I have repeatedly walked across it in about twenty seconds without wetting my ankles." Surely our accomplished author recognises a strange scale by which to estimate the value of a knowledge of rivers in the opening or matured mind! While he probably owes much, however unconsciously, of that graceful spirit which bubbles up in his style as sparkingly

as the fountains he celebrates, to his researches bordering on the Ilissus, it is difficult to sympathise with his distress in not having learned the names of all the American rivers. Of what earthly use would it be to any English gentleman to know them all as familiarly as Mrs. Malaprop her "parts of speech?" If he visits a river in America, the name of which he happens not to know, he will learn it in a minute from the first backwoodsman who will honour him with a civil answer;—and if he stays at home, what interest has he in the name of a river he will never see, though it should be five times as broad as the sea between Dover and Calais, and should lose in its breadth all the attributes which give to rivers a place in our recollection or fancy! It would be a vast addition to his knowledge to know all the names of all the inhabitants of London and Westminster, with the numbers of their houses, as authentically collected and alphabetically arranged in the Post-Office Directory—information likely to be far more convenient than the recollection of all the names of all the rivers in the new world;—but would it be wise, therefore, to fill the memory with such a nomenclature, rather than with the names of the heroes of the Trojan war, which are indexes to heroic deeds? To know that there *are* rivers in America

one hundred miles in breadth, may be well for one whose imagination has power to embrace such a waste of water; but beyond that "great fact," what blessing does a nominal acquaintance confer unless the names are themselves pictures—as "Abbana and Pharphar lucid streams?" If the value of an unseen river to the mind depends on its breadth, Sir Francis Head would prefer by ten thousand fold the St. Lawrence to the Jordan; which he might have passed with as dry though not so contemptuous a foot as the Ilissus; and he may strike the balance of the interest, according to gallons of water, between the muddy flood of the Mississippi, and "Siloa's brook that flow'd fast by the oracle of God."

In assailing the Universities, our author makes as large an admission of the excellence which they "do not prevent," as he accords to our schools. "I firmly believe," he says, "that the 1200 students, who at one time are generally at Oxford, are as high minded, as highly talented, as anxious to improve themselves, as handsome, and, in every sense of the word, as fine a set of lads, as can anywhere be met with in a body on the face of the globe." Again I ask, "what would you have more?" May not you obtain less? What is the complaint against the University so potent

that it prevents the application of the scriptural rule, "by their fruits ye shall know them?" "Arriving at Oxford, they find a splendid High Street, *magnificently illuminated with gas, filled with handsome shops, traversed by the mail, macadamized*, and like every other part of our great commercial country, *beaming with modern intelligence*. In this street, however, they *are not permitted to reside*, but conducted to the right and the left, they meander among mouldering monastic-looking buildings, until they reach the cloisters of the particular college to which they are *sentenced* to belong. By an ill-judged misnomer, they are from this moment encouraged, even by their preceptors, to call each other men, and a *man* of seventeen, too tall for school, talking of another man of eighteen, is generally, as I always mention the name of my prototype Methusalem." Now, without pausing to inquire whether the substitution of all sorts of miscellaneous information for the discipline of classical instruction will tend to prevent the assumption of mannish airs in adolescence; or to examine the results of that Prussian compulsive education which our author desiderates, in converting docile boys into conceited little men, long before the commencement of English University life,—I may venture to express my astonishment

at the description given of the High Street of Oxford, and the lamentation that the collegians, not permitted to reside amidst its "handsome shops," are sentenced to take up their abode in some monastic-looking college. The description of the "stream-like wanderings of that glorious street," is applicable, if at all, only to part of it; and what would that part be but for the "monastic-looking buildings" that glorify its continuation, and redeem its commercial beginning from the insignificance of a street of respectable shops in a country town? And does a true English writer really think that it would be better for a young man to live in such a street as he fancies this—at best, a very inferior Cheapside—than in the sequestered beauty of one of those buildings, which Time has been charmed to spare; in which the loveliness of nature has striven with the graces of art, and the influence of years, to endow fit birthplaces for immortal thoughts? Does he think that there is nothing in the hopes that are there excited; in the friendships that are there born; in the principles that are there instilled; in the veneration for greatness and the love for goodness which are there induced, tending to that result which he admits; and that when he enumerates the mere subjects of formal examination, he truly

catalogues the blessings which the University confers? Can he even look at the Colleges of Oxford, trace their histories, learn that they have gradually arisen—hall by hall—from small and humble lodgings for poor scholars, and have been increased, and adorned and enriched, by the successive piety and affection of ages; yet see them now grouped into a whole, which rather seems to be the embodiment of some one exquisite sentiment springing from a single mind, and developed in harmonious beauty, like a flower expanding, veined and streaked from the principle of loveliness within it, than the gift of various benefactors, and the work of various architects in different times, without acknowledging that it is an offspring of the love of learning and the feeling of beauty, and the reverence for the good and the great, which forms a glorious part of the national character of England, and has thus sprung and blossomed, and ripened here! What should we think, even of a foreigner, visiting Oxford for mere curiosity, who should turn with disgust from its Colleges—monastic-looking buildings—in which the students are “sentenced” to reside, but dwell with fond admiration upon its streets, as “beaming with modern intelligence”—“macadamised”—filled “with handsome shops”—and “traversed by the mail?”

There was much in this (to me) extraordinary attack on our educational system, as I read it, among some of the disciples of the system whose excellence inspired it, which made me almost suspect, as I read, that the edition had not only been printed by foreign cupidity, but interpolated by foreign taste. I was perplexed to find an English gentleman prophesying that "if our aristocracy, *with the Goul's horrid taste*, will obstinately feed itself on dead languages, while the lower classes are greedily digesting fresh, wholesome food," the lower orders will be governed no longer "by classical statesmen;" and to see him asserting, that against popular discontents "our simple and only remedy is, by resolutely breaking up the system of our public schools and universities, to show the people that we have nobly determined to become enlightened too;" that is, to become land-measurers, arithmeticians, "chemists, and buffoons;" with a smattering of a hundred things, a knowledge of few, and the conceit of knowing all.

I participate in no such apprehensions. On the contrary, it is delightful to see the influences of classical learning not fading upwards, but penetrating downwards, and masses of the people rejoicing to recognise even from afar the skirts of

its glory. The name of that famous stream, to which Sir Francis Head reverts with so much contempt, happily pronounced before thousands at Manchester, at the last anniversary of its Atheneum, by a man of genius capable of embracing the highest associations and of sympathising with the lowliest, instead of exciting scorn, tended to heighten the effect of a noble endeavour to dignify and to refine those which are surrounded by care and engrossed by labour, and who were delighted by new veins of sympathy opening between their own lives and those which happier leisure had adorned with a more serene knowledge of immortal things.

We slept at the Hotel of the Rhine, and found very preferable accommodations to those we had formerly sought on the other side of the river, and in a far more convenient situation, both for arrival and departure. After an early glimpse of the cathedral, we left Cologne by the railway for Liége—travelled thence, partly by railway and partly by carriage, to Aix-la-Chapelle; and went thence partly by railway and *diligence*, to Liége, where we slept; thence we proceeded by train to Antwerp, retracing our old ground without any fresh adventure, and arrived on the 7th of September, in time to enter on board our old ship the Antwerpen; made a swift and smooth passage to

London, and reached home on the 8th of September; after a detention of two hours at our own Custom-house, before the examination of our two small bags could be obtained (which, being obtained, lasted just two seconds), during which time we had the opportunity of learning—in the miseries inflicted by our Lords Commissioners on foreigners landing in London—a lesson of more humiliation for our country than all we had seen abroad had taught us.

As far as a rapid excursion, ungraced by female society, can be delightful, ours was crowned with decided success—full of great memories lasting as life. Its want—that of mountains of snow and ice—was a disappointment at the time; for we seemed to have twice passed the Alps without seeing them; and our only splendid view of the snowy wonders of the world was the distant panorama of Berne. How far this is really a subject of regret, is one on which I may hazard a few considerations at the close of my continental rambles. Of our two passages of the Alps, I think that of the St. Gothard the finest; for the supremacy of the *Via Malà* over the most terrible part of the descent of the Reuss is to me doubtful; while the superiority of the course of the Ticino above the descent from Splügen to

Chiavenna is beyond all question. Indeed I doubt (without prejudice to the claims of our own Wye) whether the Ticino, in substance and form—that is, in its water, and its channel—is not the loveliest river of the Old World; and I am ready to depose to my belief that it is worth all the ocean streams of the New. There is also this remarkable beauty of the St. Gothard Pass—more remarkable in recollection than in enjoyment—that it consists simply of the courses of two rivers: the Reuss leads you to Switzerland, the Ticino to Italy; and every picture of grandeur or beauty by the way has its own river for its “secret remembrancer.” Who amidst such aspiring labour or such headlong pleasure could wish for a happier artificial memory than is supplied by the courses of these rivers?

PART III.

CHAMOUNI REVISITED ;

WITH THE

ATTEMPTED ASCENT OF MONT BLANC.

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER,

1843.



CHAMOUNI REVISITED.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO BERNE.

Voyage to Antwerp—Journey from Antwerp to Cologne—Arrival at Cologne at night—Engagement with the Cologne Company for the Voyage to and from Strasburg—Voyage to Coblenz—Ehrenbreitstein and its Cannon Balls—A Night Serenade at Coblenz—Voyage to Strasburg, with a Night on the Rhine—Interior of Strasburg Minster—Best course for entering Switzerland—Progress arrested at Basle—Evening Passage through the Munster Thal to Moutiers—Journey from Moutiers to Berne.

As the valley of Chamouni, of all the places I had seen abroad, left the largest and the most vivid impression on my memory; and as at my first visit I had too hastily quitted it, and last summer had been tempted altogether to omit it from my scheme, I purposed this vacation to make it and myself amends, by regarding it as the chief object of my tour, and spending some days in acquiring a familiarity with its grandeurs. As my party now was the same as had shared my first visit to

the Alps, and as we then approached Geneva by the route of Paris, we chose the longer course, by the Rhine, in which we traversed much of the course taken by my son and myself last year; and which, though not diminished in interest to *me* by previous knowledge, must be but slightly sketched for the benefit of others. We left London in our old acquaintance, "The Antwerpen," at mid-day, on 28th August; reached Antwerp after a smooth, but not so glorious a passage as that of last year, about the same early hour; expatiated in the Cathedral; dined not riotously, as last year, but pleasantly; and reached Liége at night, with no annoyance, except the endurance of the inevitable miseries of the omnibus between the station and the hotel. The only addition we made to our Antwerpian experiences, was the antique majesty of the church of St. James—an exterior more simply impressive than that of the cathedral, because wearing an air of greater massiveness, and wanting the airy elegance of the tower, which, while it fills the sense with an angelical loveliness, dissipates all severer thoughts—and an interior more rich in monumental remains—rich, above all, in embracing the tomb of Rubens. Our way from Liége being by the railway, now open to Verviers, was through the narrow winding valleys, which disclose

a long succession of brushwood-clad rocks, like miniatures of the banks of North Wales; and so happily escaped the jolting and dusting of the old flint-paved, dust-bordered terrace, which will soon torment mankind no more—one of the few roads made desolate by railways, from which we may part without sorrow. At Verviers we found *voitures* waiting, so we bade a gay defiance to the omnibus, to which a multitude of our fellow-passengers were condemned; and, although drawn by very un-English horses, reached Aix-la-Chapelle without incident, except a detention at the Prussian Barrier, while the Custom-house officers did *not* search our packages.

We arrived at the hotel of the “Four Seasons,” in good time for its *table d’hôte* dinner of two o’clock, excellent while it lasted, but which left a long interval before the starting of the train for Cologne at six. As our good old-fashioned custom of enjoying a social repose after dinner, with the pleasant accompaniments of decanters and glasses, is not only barbarous, but impossible on the Continent, where, as soon as the long and luxurious meal is concluded, every one starts up as if the business of an empire was waiting, we found ourselves literally turned out, soon after three o’clock, to seek amusement for three hours of a sultry

afternoon. Fortunately, we recollected a small grove of trees, just beyond one of the city gates—a shady oasis, between two ascending roads, where, two years ago, we had seen and heard some small Prussian drummer-lads taught to beat time merrily on the drum ; and there lounged among the roots of fir-trees, making their shades our drawing-room, till the hour of departure approached. It was dark long before we reached the Station at Cologne ; where, escaping from the confusion of the omnibuses, we were tempted to try to wind our own way to the Hotel of the Rhine, and soon repented of our rashness. We first found ourselves in a long, dismal avenue of lofty trees, with the uncertain gleam of water below us ; then in deeper gloom, beneath the battlements of the City gates, and winding among the silent walls of the fortifications ; then emerging into a long, narrow, spectral street, the darkness and stillness of which made us shiver, and quicken our pace as much as our burthens would allow. Long did we wander in the wilderness of Cologne, shelving down as we thought, almost headlong, to the Rhine, near which the Hotel of our destination was situate, only to find ourselves on the other side of the City, till at last we met a guide, who conducted us to the Rhine Hotel, where we consoled our-

selves with consolidated tea and supper. We had also the consolation of finding some of our fellow-passengers, who had availed themselves of all the appliances of the Station, behind us ; for they had been carried about to various other hotels, which were full ; and came after us, poor silly wanderers, to take such accommodations as our previous choice had left them.

Morning opened—I can scarcely say dawned—in heavy rain ; but although it damped, it did not change our purpose of proceeding up the Rhine to Strasburg ; and we were right in our constancy, for the rain subsided during this day ; quite vanished the next morning ; and left us in full enjoyment of the luxury of almost cloudless sunshine during the residue of our tour. I believe it is a wise rule, admitting, like all good rules, of many exceptions, to proceed with your purpose, however essential the sunshine may be to its felicitous accomplishment, without any regard to the weather you start in ; for although, time out of mind, the weather has been notorious for an aptitude of disappointing all pleasurable plans dependent upon its favours, it is still more inclined to double the annoyance by clearing up as soon as your opportunity is lost ; so the best way to defeat its waywardness is to treat it with haughty disregard. As

I was standing at the Hotel-gate, keeping watch over our effects, prepared for transmission to the Rhine, I was accosted by a most disinterested friend to strangers, who, after inquiring whether I proposed to leave Cologne by the morning boat, assured me that it was absolutely necessary to procure tickets for the voyage before starting, and most kindly offered to conduct me to the proper office to procure them. Although I doubted whether a regulation so stringent had been made, and whether the production of a proper number of Napoleons even on board the steamer might not have averted Jonah's fate from us, still—as the statement might be true, and the matter was imminent, I dashed with him through the rain to the office of the Cologne Company, beside the river. By some strange felicity, he grew suddenly familiar with the officials there; told them the number of which my party consisted, as if he knew it by intuition; and strongly enforced the advice which the clerk gave, that we should not merely take our tickets for Coblenz, as I had proposed, but all the way to Strasburg—and not *to* Strasburg only, but back again to Cologne — and his perseverance was crowned with perfect success; for, having no time to deliberate, and being half convinced of the cheapness of the arrangement, and half glad to

resign all the power and the weakness of free will as to the course of return, I gave up myself and party to the Cologne Company, "for better and for worse;" paid the reasonable price of 220 francs for each for the outward and homeward voyage; and received in return tickets amounting to a contract of insurance, to Strasburg and back, with liberty to touch and stop at all ports and places—to go as rapidly or as slowly as I pleased—and to leave, join, and rejoin, any of the company's vessels, at any place and any time within the season. I am bound to say that, except in a minor article of an *unvisèd* passage through Strasburg, the contract was faithfully performed; and would recommend a similar engagement to any one who has made up his mind as to his homeward course—and who would rather not be tempted to change it. My unknown friend, who had consigned me and mine thus suddenly to Strasburg, did not wait even for thanks, but vanished as soon as he saw the bargain completed; an instance of disinterestedness it is right to record. He could have no motive for serving me, but as one of the human race; whether he had any object less refined in relation to the Cologne Company, I must leave as matter of conjecture to those who are obstinately bent on the idle search of motives for actions.

It seemed a melancholy thing at first, to be confined in a small steam-boat, at seven o'clock in the morning, wet through from the preliminary passages ; in a dense rain ; launched on the Rhine in search of pleasure and the picturesque ; but by making the best of matters, we soon found them tolerable ; then hopeful ; then charming. Breakfast, judiciously deferred for the steamer, and now liberally ordered by our youngest appetite, amused the first hour ; the next was lightened by watching through our small windows the effects of the steam-boat and the rain on the river, which seemed to be cut into pieces of slate-coloured satin or sarsenet, and spotted by millions of drops ; the third in trying to discover the banks, which the slowly receding mists promised to reveal, and in reflecting that they would not be worth seeing if they appeared ; until, as we approached Bonn, the rain diminished so much as to allow of our walking the deck, in time to see the clouds roll away from the Drachenfells and leave them standing clear, solemnised by that dark purple tinge which the retreating showers leave on the hills. They were finer, however, in the retrospect than in the approach ; for the nearest mountain, when passed, seemed to rise precipitately from the water, which looked bound in by the land on all sides in a lake before it, and now

softly green, reflected its crested majesty on the clear gliding mirror. The weather continued to exhibit a pretty fickleness—cloud, and shower, and gleam—till we reached Coblenz at five o'clock ; and found accommodation and comfort at the Giant, although two sentinels, lounging over their muskets, at the door, indicated that it was honoured with the presence of a Prussian General.

Although the evening was moist and showery, we crossed the Bridge of Boats to Ehrenbreitstein ; passed through a long outer court of the fortress unchallenged ; and took refuge from a shower in the mouth of one of its caverns, whence subterraneous but ascending passages lead to its higher galleries. Below us lay, in iron, unmitigated by moss or rust, horribly bright for carnage, thousands of cannon-balls ; while around and above us the rocks and rock-like fortifications mortised into them, were gradually yielding their stiff, cold, formal, warlike fronts to the weather-stains, the lichens, the bird-sown shrubs—all the soft approaches of green. There lay the most destructive implements of war, ready for immediate service ; here breathed the gentlest teachings of peace, not in lessons of prim Quaker formality, but expressed by “ nature’s own sweet and cunning hand,” stealing away the aspects of hostility from

Europe's strongest fortress ; as, if it were shattered or decayed, she would beautify its ruins. Best of peacemakers ! Her wisdom is penetrating the mailed breast of Prussia ; and may find even there an echo to my wish that those balls may lie and rust, till they shall harmonise in dull colour with the grass-green heights above them !

We retired early to rest, as we were bound to pursue our journey at six o'clock on the morrow ; but our sleep was strangely (I cannot say rudely), broken or averted. Occupying a front chamber, very far uplifted in our Giant mansion, I could just discern as I lay, through an open window, the furthest water of the Rhine glistening gently by in waterish moonlight ; and it was just beginning to mingle with some dream of "Alph, the sacred river," when a strain aroused me—not at all "like the faint exquisite music of a dream," but a real substantial sound from a number of stout voices, chanting or singing in tremendous chorus. This drew me to the window, when—far below me on the terrace, which runs along the line of hotels confronting the river—I discovered a narrow row of tables, with benches on each side, like the dinner tables of a Sunday-school anniversary, covered with music books, over which, by the light of some twenty tall tallow dips, which flared

magnificently into the darkness, two rows of dingy-looking young men were bending, who instantly jerked up their heads in unison, and renewed the chorus. It was no other than "Young Coblentz"—such of the sons and apprentices of the patriot citizens as had voices and skill to use them—assembled to give a serenade in honour of the distinguished officer who lodged at the hotel. Anon, the singing paused—loud huzzas, accompanied by the waving of sticks and caps in the murky air, followed—and then all was so still that you could hear the ripple of the Rhine. The General had recognised the sweet voices of the civic enthusiasts, and appeared, or rather presented himself in the small balcony of his apartment just below me. He made a speech—I have no doubt "neat and appropriate," as it was unquestionably short—and concluded with the emphatical enunciation of the word "Coblentz," which produced three rounds of huzzas and "one cheer more." The serenade was now resumed—one piece was lustily performed—and the music books were just adjusted and the voices raised for a second, when down rushed a torrent of envious rain like a water-spout, and struck the lines of musicians into dripping and shivering groups, and the lights into sudden darkness. I retired from the window think-

ing that all was over ; but before I could quite reach oblivion, I heard once more the patriotic music “piercing the night’s dull ear,” which was now at its very dullest, forcing a desperate way upwards as if it was muffled yet resolved—and, on thrusting my head once more out into the rain, beheld, where lately the candles had flared, a long double row of umbrellas, beneath which the undaunted vocalists had rallied, sheltering their music books and candles ; and which, being of various colours, looked like a tessellated pavement strangely illuminated from below, on which the elements beat in vain, or like some sea-caves in which *mermen* were chanting. The vision of the umbrellas did not, however, last long ; the music, after reminding me of Mr. Dismal’s hilarious contribution to the late Mr. Matthews’ “Nightingale Club,” stopped ; whether the General, contented with the gratification lavished on his nocturnal hours, intimated that enough had been done for glory, or whether the patriotic fire burned itself out, I know not ; but the songsters gave a cheer to the tune of a shriek, and dispersed—having, as the *garçon* next morning assured us, scarcely commenced the serenade they had rehearsed,—and left the General, and us, and the world, at peace.

At six we were again on the river, in the midst

of a faint drizzle, which soon ceased, and was followed by the first of a succession of glorious days. Slowly—in happier state than that of Cleopatra on the Cydnus, because impelled by a mightier slave than all her rowers—we were borne through the great gorge of the Rhine, recognising now each successive rock and castle as an old acquaintance, breathing of happy hours; then through its expanse of waters, sometimes relieved by the perplexity of island-bound reaches, till the long hours of darkness came on, longer than usual, before we reached Mannheim, as a strong wind blew against us. We felt these, however, the less irksome, because we were not looking out with a vain impatience for the lights of Mannheim, as when they glimmered, they glimmered not for us; for “bent on speed,” with Chamouni in the distance, we accepted the option offered us of proceeding through the night, in a narrow and sharp steamer, formed to cut its way through the shallows, which would start on our arrival, and which, we were assured, would land us at Strasburg on the following evening, in time for the last train for Basle; and, as the power of the Cologne Company was vouched to carry us through its formidable passages *unviséd*, and unsearched of justice, we should ere night thus achieve a marvellous progress. Al-

though the last promise was not fulfilled, we found no reason to regret our choice; to go to bed at twelve o'clock, even at the Hôtel de l'Europe, to rise at four, would have been a mere variety of unrest, more tantalizing than that which we preferred; and then we should spend the night in diminishing, however slowly, the distance between us and the enchanted land of our destiny. At Mannheim we were, amidst a brief and dark confusion, with a few passengers as wise or as impatient as ourselves, decanted into the small steamer. As fortunately there was no withered piece of once female humanity, with the rank of a German Princess on board, the ladies were accommodated with sofas in the pretty nest, called "The Pavilion," while the male voyagers bivouacked in the saloon, each embracing his carpet-bag for his pillow, ready in a moment to defend purse and passport against any river attorney who might practise upon these lone waters. Notwithstanding the uneasiness of the position, I obtained some "twinklings of oblivion," but heartily did I rejoice to see the cold grey light through the one small pane of side-glass left unblinded, and stumbled my dangerous way over the bodies of prostrate sleepers—which Lady Macbeth herself would scarcely have ventured to assert were "but as pictures"—and achieved the free-

dom of the deck, and the blessing of pure air. The moonlight was still blended with the tints of dawn; at first the low white mist allowed only a small circle of the water to be explored, but soon the bushes of a long island, near which we were proceeding, showed their green branches through it; and a poplar's topmost tracery, at a distance pierced the fog, and exulted in the pale sky. The mists, retreating, breaking, uprising, dispersing; sometimes cleaving to a bit of foliage, as if reluctant to loose their slight individuality; sometimes refining and vanishing in the sky, as if happy to be so exhaled, leaving one thin wayward fleece, hesitating between earth and heaven, gave perpetual employment to the eye, before the river and its banks were fully disclosed in the brightness of the assured daylight. It was a delicious morning; its breath a freshness I had never felt till now, far beyond (I should think) the "freshness of a dream," by which any but a poet great as Wordsworth could be visited; and which, having found some rude appliances of ablution, I had scarcely hoped for on board a German steamer, I was perhaps disposed to enjoy the more, from the slight fever of short and imperfect rest, and the contrast with the questionable atmosphere of the cabin. However this may be, it was thorough enjoyment;

nor did it diminish when the fancy-winged throng of vapours disappeared, and the great field of water and air expanded in the "light of common day." We were slowly moving up the broad bosom of the Rhine; here unromantic, "unhonoured and unsung," but presenting scenes of soft, touching, solitary beauty. Its banks were uniformly flat—nearly level with its wide stream, which sometimes eddied round a tuft of osiers, set like a flower-bed within it; sometimes glided beneath a grove of thinly-clustered trees, the front stems all silvery in the sun, those seen within sinking into variety of dusk, and the topmost leaves glistening with gold; sometimes bordered by a thickly-matted copse, with here and there the opening as of a wood-walk, carrying the thought far into some unpretending scene of sylvan repose; sometimes working its way beneath the roots of a stately line of poplars, which it at once nourished and undermined; sometimes divided by a long low island, fringed with tall purple flowers, inviting yet defying human grasp; sometimes perplexing the view by a side-long avenue of water, like another river meeting it, and afterwards claiming it for its own; and thus, not now bound in by those huge barriers of hills and rocks which limit its progress, while they attest its strength, is here more decidedly lord of the scene;

making its way through a yielding soil "at its own sweet will," among woods and banks ready to melt into it, while, at distance, the pink streaks of the eastern sky seemed to touch and crown it with celestial hues, as I have seen fragments of rainbows float on the broad bosom of Loch Lomond. In the mere idle desire of progress, which we cherish in the pleasantest journey—by an instinct which shows that our rest is not to be found even in the most blessed passages of this life—I repeatedly fixed my eyes on a line of poplars four or five miles off, at the edge of the extreme view, as a point in our voyage, and then so melted down the intervening hour to minutes in pleasant thought, that I started to find the lucid expanse past, and the poplars close to us. At length, a bridge of boats, gradually becoming distinct, added a human interest to the watery perspective; which we found to mark the boundary between the dominions of Baden and France, at the spot where voyagers land who are destined to Carlsruhe. At the bridge we were detained half an hour, on some matter of mere dancing-master ceremony observed between the two Powers; the flag of France was waving to our right hand, but no flag of Baden answered it; and we were told that the boat would not pass till that signal gave it permission.

The official whose high duty it was to hoist it had not risen, or chose to make us sensible of the power of the small State under which he was a small stipendiary ; so we waited, not impatiently but somewhat curiously, until a pretty striped flag streamed aloft, when the bridge opened, and the steam-boat glided through it. The voyage soon increased in interest, for while the shores still presented only their low fringes of wood and coppice, the distance on the left was enriched by the outlines of the mountains of the Black Forest, so spiritualized by the light vapours which the sun drew up, as to seem fit region for the wildest and most graceful of romantic conceptions. When dinner, in due time, was served on deck, beneath an awning, to our small party, and we had taken our seats fronting the mountain range, I felt our position one of unequalled luxury:—shaded from the noontide sun ; gently gliding along the bright and brimming river ; light airs playing round us ; a silver plain of water for our foreground ; beyond it, rich pastures, like a grass-plat, dotted with trees ; and far beyond the vision of the mountains —no evanescent picture swiftly floated by, but kept in full view, unchanged for hours, except as the clouds shifted their large shadows on the plain, or the mists disclosed some rounded top or

brown descent of the hills, in sudden distinctness ; and the pleasure enhanced by that lassitude which the broken rest of the night, and the heat of the day produced, and which disposed the mind and body to the perfect enjoyment of indolent luxury!


As the sun declined and the lights on the river grew richer and mellower, our assurance that we should land in time for the train for Basle, and pass through Strasburg as free as if the Royal Albert and Victoria had borne us, began to dwindle to hope ; hope sank with the sun to bare possibility, and gave place to despair, long before its setting ; we foresaw a night at Strasburg, and grim shapes of custom-house officers, and whiskered guards began to rise before us. Some of our companions proposed to avert these evils by landing at Kehl in the Baden territory ; but while we were deliberating on the prudence of following their example, the steamer decided for all ; for instead of holding its course up the stream to the bridge, which was in sight, it turned to the right into a huge canal, and steamed up it among wharfs and villas, and the backs of gaunt houses ; but interspersed everywhere with glowing vegetation, into the very heart of Strasburg, where the custom-house officers inspected our baggage—very lightly

and graciously, however—and where our passport was required and given. As an omnibus bearing the name of our old quarters, the Hôtel La Fleur, was waiting among others, whose conductors must have anticipated the unexpected lateness of the steamer, and the sudden necessity that compelled it thus to belie the promises of its owners, we entered it, and were soon welcomed by our host of 1840 to newly painted and newly furnished chambers. We did not wait, however, longer than was necessary to secure our rooms and order tea; but hurried to the cathedral, in hope to reach it before its time of closing should arrive. We were too late for its hours of worship; its doors were locked; and though they were speedily expanded at the application of the universal talisman, we felt, on entering the glorious pile, the painful difference between the great church, freely open to all worshippers, and all who, entering mere admirers, might be raised or awed into worship, and the splendid show exhibited by a mercenary guide. Instead of sharing or trying to share in the pieties of the evening service; or catching a sense of devotion from the bowed head of some poor rapt adorer, we saw the aisles and altars irradiated by the evening sunbeams which streamed through the painted window in richest and *thickest* light;


but the place was less hallowed than enchanted. We were conducted through the routine of all the curiosities, a process destructive of all great sentiment; and, among these, the clock, the most famous in the world—except Master Humphry's. It is a mere foolish toy, comprising several pieces of unmeaning mechanism, by one of which it shows the day of the month as well as any penny almanack, and by another sends out twelve figures of the apostles when it strikes certain hours; and does various other things fit to amuse a child in a fitting place, but quite unworthy of its holy station. Our detention at Strasburg did not prove a serious evil; for we obtained our passport duly *viséd* as soon as we regained the inn; enjoyed our tea and some other associated comforts before an early retirement to rest; felt ourselves in some measure at home, for though we missed our pleasant English-speaking *garçon*, who had migrated to Geneva, we were cordially recognised by the landlord, who sent us to the railway station, three miles from the city gates, in his own private carriage. Starting thence at seven in the morning we reached Basle by twelve, in time to join the *table d'hôte* dinner at a good, though homely inn, called "The Cigogne," to which we had been conveyed by its own attendant omnibus, and to

engage a *voiturier*, who undertook to start with us forthwith on the way to Berne, through the majestic pass of the Munster Thal (which having seen myself I was anxious to show to my fair companions), and to deposit us at the end of our journey on the next evening.

When we took our seats in the open carriage at half-past two, under a cloudless sky, commencing our travels on Swiss ground, I exulted that the labour of the journey was past, and that henceforth all our travels would be, not in search of pleasure, but in its perpetual enjoyment; and yet how little alloy had mingled with the happiness of the past way, beyond the short fatigue which sweetens refreshment and repose! I think the course which we adopted in this visit to Switzerland is by far the best for entering it; presenting in the happiest gradation, and with the best pauses and intermixtures, the beautiful, romantic, wild, grand, sublime. The Rhine, surveyed from the labouring steamer, is the smoothest, serenest, and most silent of highways; at first a mere body of living water, it steals away as it glides the feverish vestiges of the year's anxiety and disappointment, "and all that is at enmity with joy;" and steadies the mind to receive, as in a mirror, all the glorious images that await it. The romantic passages



which follow, between Bonn and Bingen, feed the desire of beauty without overwhelming it; their mirrored ruins fill with calm suggestions of long-past time the spirit which has just cast off the dominion of worldly cares; the distant apparition of the clustered hills of the Black Forest excites without ruffling the fancy, and nourishes the love of mountains by the unclothed simplicity of the forms which the mists unveil; till the embodied piety of Strasburg Minster sheds a sacredness upon all things. The railway transition from Strasburg to Basle is a mere parenthesis—so rapid, that if its attendant scenery does not heighten the mood for appreciating Swiss greatness, it does not disturb it; and then comes the Munster Thal, the solemn vestibule to the World's Palace, grand in itself, and opening to the most expanded view of its distant wonders, and that which best prepares the stranger for a nearer acquaintance with them. By proceeding through German cities, as Carlsruhe, Frankfort, Heidelberg, and still more by preliminary visits to watering-places, as Baden or Wiesbaden, the mind is dissipated among other interests and associations which, in proportion as they are captivating in themselves, relax its power of grasping the images of the Alps. By crossing France to Geneva, and catching sight of Mont



Blanc and its subject Alps from the brink of the Jura, the traveller is startled by an effect more sudden and amazing—the contrast between the dusty flatness of France and the airy splendour of snows uplifted into the skies; but even if the caprice of the weather should allow him to enjoy the contrast in perfection, still it is contrast that perturbs, not harmony that fills and satisfies; nor has the eye or the mind been educated to receive or to appreciate the new nature thus poured upon them.


At the outset of our Swiss career, we met with a slight hindrance, which, at the time, puzzled more than it amused us. About a quarter of a mile beyond the gate of Basle, at a point whence two great roads diverge, stands—as all the world ought to know, but as we were not then aware—a cross, on a little elevation, commemorative of the bravery and destruction of a small band of Swiss, who, in 1444, resisted the army of France ten times its number, until all but ten were slain—a spot worthy to be regarded as the Swiss Thermopylæ. The mound was now begirt by a motley crowd; and, on approaching, we saw ranged along its brow a row of lads, of all sizes, apparently between the ages of ten and eighteen, dressed in hussar jackets and white trousers; some with muskets, some with pikes, some with musical instruments; not very

orderly, but very merry ; whom we supposed to be the pupils of a great school, playing at soldiers. It was, however, a more serious matter ; for our driver stopped, though the crowd was not dense, and showed no disposition to obstruct our passage ; and remained staring, regardless of our entreaties that he would go on, which possibly he did not understand, and of our gestures, which he could not mistake ; and presently left us and his horses unattended, while he placed his hands in his pockets and mingled with the crowd, and thus made us enforced, and rather alarmed, witnesses of the proceeding. A gentleman in black came forward, at the head of the young patriots, looking like their schoolmaster, and made a speech to the crowd—short, but vehemently gesticulated—yet, strange to say, it was productive of no applause. Its termination, however, was hailed by us with satisfaction ; because our driver returned, and slowly resumed his seat, just as we were on the point of removing our luggage from the vehicle and returning to the City, as our only mode of extrication from the imminent peril of being left in the midst of a crowd at the mercy of Swiss horses. He drove slowly on through the people, who made way for us without objection ; and we went on without receiving any information respecting the

occasion of our stoppage. I suppose, from what I have subsequently read, that it was a celebration of the anniversary of the battle ; but why the Swiss heroes were represented only by such juvenile performers, is still a mystery.

Beauty waited on us with deepening colours till nightfall. Our road, bordered only by fruit-trees, first wound through open meadows edging the Birs ; the pure sparkling stream, whose magnificent domain we were about to ascend, almost from its confluence with the Rhine—lucid recipient of a hundred lovely streams—to its highest source. We approached the low-wooded hills, the outskirts of the Jura bathed now in full sunshine, which opened to receive our road, forming around it a succession of verdant amphitheatres, connected by narrow alleys, all bright with the liveliest green, along the level floor of which the clear river glided. As the evening light thickened, the road grew lovelier ; the glens became ravines, built up with dark rocks ; and we regretted to learn our driver's determination to proceed in the dark, after a rest of half-an-hour at a pretty village, as we were approaching the wildest and noblest depths of the Pass. I do not think, however, that we have reason to deplore the dogged determination which he evinced to proceed as far as Moutiers ; for the glens of the Thal,

which I had seen in day, were more awful, and hardly less lovely, in the darkness. Although we could not *see* the transition from the beach, the coppice-wood, and the birch to the firs and pines, we *felt* it; deep defile after deep defile opened and closed around us, sometimes shutting us in so close, that the road and river occupied the whole floor of the Pass; and the sides rose up towards the dark blue sky, looking perpendicular; while, on the highest tops, a pine or poplar often spread out its tracery, as if among the stars. They sparkled above the narrow orifice; but earth had lights which matched those in lustre—glow-worms of exquisite beauty, illustrating the sternest passages of the way. Sometimes we came close to one of those globes of green light, meekly resting in the thick grass which fringed the road and the stream;—sometimes a small cluster of them forming a constellation glistened far up on a crag, or at the base of a rocky pillar, breaking out from the side of the precipice; sometimes across the river, amidst the scarce-discerned roots of shaggy pines, a single lamp shone out in heavenly serenity—a star of earth. F—— gave a pretty solution of these fair problems of Nature, which I should despoil, in repeating, of its gloss, as much as I should one of the insect sparklers, by snatching it from its bed or



throne, and bringing it into the blaze of a common lamp, an insignificant brown worm. Its substance was, that the male glow-worm is endowed with wings, which the female wants; and he, too often neglectful of his mate, prolongs the enjoyment of his airy privilege, while she languishes for his return; and that the lonely and loving female, supplied with this lustral power, hangs out her lamp of love, to rekindle his gossamer sympathy, and win and guide him home. The stillness of the night was sometimes violently broken by the heavy sound of work in iron—ponderous noises—and its darkness was displaced by the sudden apparition of a forge, with a huge fire, and grim figures of stalwart workmen, with massive arms, stirring the lumps of flame, or beating the bars of red-hot iron—strange forms to glare in on the loveliness of such a night, reminding us of the charcoal burners of the Hartz Mountains, and things even more fearful; for the depths of the Jura, rich in minerals, are alive with industry, and maintain an energetic and honest population among their folds. In their bosom, but in a wide and fertile circle, which they recede on all sides to form, stands Moutiers—a busy, and for a busy, not dirty town—where we stopped at a large old-fashioned inn; found good tea, cold meat, light


wine, and clean beds, in spacious chambers ; and dreamed of the loves of the glow-worms.

We left Moutiers in time to witness one of the loveliest sunrises I have ever seen—except at sea—and soon crossing the open valley, entered narrow winding glens, like those we had traversed in the gloom, alleys of rock clothed with black firs, and reconciled to beauty by the ever-lucid stream and the living green which fringed its margin. These led to another open valley—the valley of Tavannes—bright with fertile meadows, and dotted with frequent cottages, in which we stopped at an hotel praised by Murray, in front of which stood several English carriages, indicating the success of the recommendation. We did not test its justice, for the master of our horses and movements indicated that he could not allow us to breakfast so early ; but as he refreshed his horses with bread and water, and as a long hill slanted just before us, we walked on, observing the dwindlings of the infant Birs to its source, a bright spring not far from the path. Our way, between sloping meadows plenteously sprinkled with the pale violet crocus, led up to the rocky barrier of the vale, which is here pierced by an arch of forty feet in height—apparently natural, but widened by art—bearing the name of *Pierre Portius*—and

the remains of a Roman inscription ; through which, looking backward as through a framework, there is a radiant picture of the valley and the next barrier of the Jura range. The onward road continued to rise gently between pine-clad heights, and then descended among similar boundaries, but with lovelier accompaniments of detail. Here we recognised the minor beauties of Switzerland in all their affluence : the luxuriant shrubs ; the patches and clumps of bright field-flowers ; the joyous play of dazzling insects, butterflies of all sizes and hues, and dragon-flies with loveliest wings of gauze ; the remarkable combination of a sense of perfect dryness, with the green which seemed as if bathed in perpetual showers ; the sweet scents perfuming without loading the air, blending in one charm the sense of luxury with that of freshness, so exquisitely felt at early morning in the Swiss valleys. Still walking on, we ascended another hill, and reaching now the crest of the outermost rind of the Jura, beheld the range of the Bernese Alps, like clouds, but "O how different!"—the solid fabric of this rock-built world—substance, not shadow—refined by sixty miles of air, and touched by the selectest influences of heaven ! Glorious vision ! And what a stately position from whence to embrace

it was ours ! Above us the crown of our hill rose rough with beauty ; beside our curving path sunk a glen, so deep that its stream was scarcely audible ; below us stretched the sunniest plains ; beyond all the glistening snow-tops, with an icy precipice here and there slanting down amidst its own peculiar gleams. Here the carriage overtook us ; we resumed our seats, and descended amidst vineyard-clad rocks—like altars to Bacchus, bearing their own offerings—to Bienne, where our coachman consummated all our happiness by telling us that he should rest for two hours, and that we might breakfast.

In a shady upper chamber of the “ Hôtel of the Jura,” a good inn just outside the town-walls, we took our longed-for and leisurely repast, of tea, chicken, cutlets, ham, and wine ; not indisposed to beguile the time which remained, after the rage of hunger and thirst was appeased, by trying to decipher the historical pictures which the paper-hangings of the room exhibited — a series of sieges, battles, escapes, executions, pardonings, in all of which Napoleon appeared—the hero of a hundred cocked hats—but we could make out nothing distinctly except the Farewell after the Abdication at Fontainebleau, and the Flight from Waterloo — for French taste had



twisted everything into such scenic formalities, that heroism scarcely knew itself—and yet these two disastrous points in the Emperor's story, by suggesting the romantic interval, imply more greatness than all his victories.

The twenty miles journey between Bienne and Berne had nothing of interest beyond meadows and orchards, with glimpses of the distant Alps, until, towards its close, the road suddenly descended to the Aar; here a broad, blue, rushing stream, bent in a crescent, hemmed in by masses of wood, within which it might wind a hidden power and beauty, but for the opening made by the bridge, which we crossed. From its opposite edge we ascended a long hill, darkened by a thick wood of pine, which rendered the sight of Berne, lying directly below the summit, within an isthmus formed by the Aar, of which we had just seemed to take leave, and now saw again beneath our feet, almost startling. A heap of buildings, massed, piled up, turretted and pinnacled, from the embrace of this blue loop of rapid water, around which lovely pastures were tossed in bold undulations, stood before us in full view; and considering that its aspect was that of a closely built town, without any grand buildings, it presented a scene of extraordinary beauty. We reached the Falcon in time

for the latest *table d'hôte*, and caught a glimpse of the Alpine panorama afterwards, from an open space in the town and the walks on the ramparts—a happy glimpse—for though the greater part of the Alpine horizon was veiled in clouds, the Jungfrau and two great cones stood greyly out as defying them; and the foreground—the steep descent below—the azure Aar—and its richly expanding banks looked so lovely, that it seemed more like duty than pleasure to look beyond it, and search for Alps in the distance; and the eye, after its busy toil, craved its reward in resting on the nearest scenery, which courted its untiring gaze. By the advice of the master of our hotel, we engaged our *voiturier* to take us to Vevay, being assured that he would convey us to Bulle on the following day; whence, by starting early, he would place us on the shore of Lake Lemman, in time to catch the first steamer on its returning voyage, and thus enable us to reach Geneva by mid-day, in good time to pay our dues to the Sardinian consul and obtain his permission to gaze on Chamouni.

CHAPTER II.

JOURNEY FROM BERNE TO CHAMOUNI.

Perplexed Starting from Berne—Neueneck—A Lady imposed on us—The Value of a Protest—Freyburg—Its Church and Organ—Bulle—The Steamer unreachd—Vevay—Byron and Rousseau—Chillon—Lake of Geneva—Lausanne at distance—Gibbon and Kemble—Passport Adventure at Geneva—Bonneville revisited—The Pass of Cluses—A Priest imposed on us—Walk to Chamouni.

ALTHOUGH we were to start at six, we rose in time to pay a visit to the ramparts, and to see some edges of the Alpine range breaking through the mist of morning; and were ready to start at the appointed hour. We were surprised to find a different carriage and horses provided for us than those which had brought us from Basle; but were satisfied on the *maître d'hôtel* stating, that he feared our old driver did not accurately know the way, and, therefore, he had engaged another *voiturier* for us on the same terms. To this transfer, as the horses looked stronger than our last, we did not object; but were "perplexed in the extreme" when we saw our former coachman harness his horses, and remove our luggage to his carriage. A controversy between the two parties ensued;


we sought our host in vain ; no one else could or would enlighten us ; and we stood in the street at Berne for half an hour, while the two heroes of the whip were contending about us, with as little voice in the matter as poor Briseis was allowed in the old quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles. The host at last appeared, and on our entreating him to decide the fray, he determined in favour of the new *régime*, and we were placed under the government of the usurping coachman.

As we quitted Berne, passing the palace of its Bears, we lost sight of the snowy Alps ; but a ridge of rocky mountains, singularly grotesque in form, rose before us from a basin of rich verdure. Descending into this hollow, we reached at its bottom the village of Neueneck, where a stream separates the canton of Berne from that of Freyburg. Our driver recommended our breakfasting here, in a tone of authority which we did not feel strong enough to resist ; though having only travelled a few miles, and not admiring the aspect of the inn, we wished to proceed further. He spoke a little of a strange sort of French ; and, therefore, the avenues of communication were not so hermetically sealed as in the case of my German governor of last year ; but the difference was not much in our favour : for whereas my old plague understood

nothing that I said, this new one understood nothing but what he chose to answer. Obedience now seemed best ; we partook of a homely breakfast under the auspices of a short, round, smirking landlord, who was proud of a smattering of English, and recommended his eggs as "fresh from the cock." When we paid his bill, he communicated to us in French almost as bad as his English, that a lady, for whom our driver said he ought to have waited, had arrived from Berne, and was to be our travelling companion. As we had bargained with our real original coachman for the whole carriage, which, with the exception of a share of the driver's seat, our party filled, and understood that the contract was transferred *in omnibus* to his successor, we were as much surprised as vexed at this attempt to impose an unknown female upon us and the horses. From the first, we suspected that we had been made the subjects of a job ; but conjectured that it consisted merely in a transfer of the bargain to the driver of some vehicle which was returning to Vevay ; and that, after agreeing to the change, our proper driver had quarrelled with his substitute respecting the shares in the spoils, by which we had lost a precious hour at Berne ; but that we were subject to such enforced companionship as this was beyond all our fears. When, however,

the carriage appeared, no lady was visible in the offing; so we trusted that it was a mere phantom of a lady which had haunted our host like the White Lady of Avenel; and began to ascend the long stony steep which leads from the village, keeping our seats, however, instead of walking as we should otherwise have done, in ease of the horses, considering a possessory title the best to stand or sit upon. Too soon we observed the evil in advance—a tall scraggy female, of an uncertain age, but somewhat between fifty and sixty, clothed in rusty black, with a parcel in one hand wrapped in a pocket-handkerchief of the same colour, only relieved by spots, and in the other an umbrella, which had once been green, with which she protected all that she had of complexion from the scorching sun; we passed her, however, and she made no sign; we began to hope she was not to prove a black speck upon our happiness; but when we reached the top of the hill, the carriage stopped, and she prepared, without ceremony, to take her seat on the box. I remonstrated with the driver;—our ladies, always energetic in the cause of the *mute* creation (as Lord Erskine happily designated those whom men call *brutes*), were eloquent in the cause of the horses; I was indignant at the substitution of a black gown for the pros-

pect of the country, which it would exclude ; but the lady did not seem to hear us, or the driver to mind us ; he was dogged in his resolution, and she was soon firm in her seat. We then spoke with him apart ; but he understood, of course, as little as he pleased ; at first he seemed inclined to insist that he had a right to take any partner of his own seat, but he abandoned this ground and pleaded “that she was only going as far as Freyburg.” What could we do ? Three courses were open to us—to submit in silence—to leave the carriage and take our luggage back to the village, which we threatened—and to protest ; and we chose the last ; we protested with as much good effect as a peer in hopeless opposition, or the Player-Queen in Hamlet. I consoled myself, as we went on, conquered and burthened and darkened and protesting, with calling to mind a Protest I had heard many years ago in the Court of King’s Bench, and thinking that after all a Protest is a better peace-maker than an *If*. It was in those true Tory times, now for ever fled ; after the period “when spies and special juries were unknown,” and before these days when spies have grown historical, and special juries, even in the Exchequer, give verdicts against the Crown ; that the celebrated Mr. Henry Hunt, in his character of redresser of wrongs, became the champion



of an idle lad named Dogood, who had been imprisoned on some pretence as idle as himself, and assuming that the Lord Chief Justice sat for the redress of all grievances, attended during one long day's sharp sitting at Nisi Prius to address Lord Ellenborough on the subject's wrongs. He found no opportunity, however, on which even his consummate impudence could seize, till the business closed; for Lord Ellenborough, who had come down after an interval, during which his substitutes had made slow progress, was rushing through the list like a rhinoceros through a sugar plantation, or a Common Serjeant in the evening through a paper of small larcenies; but just as he had nonsuited the plaintiff in the twenty-second cause, which the plaintiff's attorney had thought safe till the end of a week, and was about to retire to his turtle with the conviction of having done a very good morning's work, an undeniable voice exclaimed, "My lord!" and Mr. Hunt was seen on the floor, with his peculiar air—perplexed between that of a bully and a martyr. The Bar stood aghast at his presumption; the ushers' wands trembled in their hands; and the reporters, who were retiring after a very long day, during which, though some few city firms had been crushed into bankruptcy and some few hearts broken, by the results of the causes, they

could honestly describe as "affording nothing of the slightest interest except to the parties," rushed back and seized their note books to catch any word of that variety of rubbish which is of "public interest." My lord paused, and looked thunders, but spoke none. "I am here, my lord, on the part of the boy Dogood," proceeded the undaunted Quixote. His lordship cast a moment's glance on the printed list, and quietly said, "Mr. Hunt, I see no name of any boy Dogood in the paper of causes," and turned towards the door of his room. "My lord!" vociferated the orator, "am I to have no redress for an unfortunate youth? I thought your lordship was sitting for the redress of injuries in a court of justice." "O no, Mr. Hunt!" still calmly responded the judge, "I am sitting at Nisi Prius; and I have no right to redress any injuries except those which may be brought before the jury and me in the causes appointed for trial." "My lord," then said Mr. Hunt, somewhat subdued by the unexpected amenity of the judge, "I only desire to protest." "O, is that all?" said Lord Ellenborough; "by all means protest, and go about your business!" So Mr. Hunt protested, and went about his business; and my lord went unruffled to his dinner; and both parties were content. In like manner, we satisfied ourselves

with protesting ; the lady retained her seat ; and the carriage proceeded to Freyburg. To finish the episode of the lady, I may as well anticipate our course a little, and go back when we have dropped her. Notwithstanding the assurance of our coachman that she was only bound to Freyburg, and the confirmation it seemed to receive from her disappearance there, we had no sooner begun to ascend the hill beyond the city gate, than we saw again the same black gown wave, and the identical umbrella lower before us ; and though we detached the youngest of our party to take the place on the box, our coachman insisted on his quitting it. This produced an explanation with the fair one beneath, who astonished us by asserting that the carriage was more hers than ours ; that she had a right to any or every seat in it ; that she was the servant of a lady who had engaged the carriage from Vevay to Berne, and had directed her to return in it to Vevay ; and that the coachman, finding more profitable passengers, had gone off without her, and she had followed him to reclaim her rights. We could not refute this statement, which was probably in part true, though she must have been in collusion with the driver at Freyburg ; as, had she told this story there, we should have sifted it, and either have disproved it or taken


another carriage. We were now, however, fixed with the fair one, without even the relief of grumbling at her presence; on the contrary, we felt bound to make her amends by extra civility, especially as she refused to exercise any control over the carriage except sitting on its box. She said she was only annoyed because she feared "Madame regarded her as a *mauvaise femme*;" a notion which never entered Madame's mind; indeed if our companion had not been strictly entitled, by virtue of Milton's authority, to call on a thousand liveried angels to lackey her, she might safely traverse "savage wilds," without the fear of affront from the rudest followers of Comus. So we may drop her now; though we did not do so in verity till we reached the Lake of Geneva.

Freyburg, which we saw before noon, comprises the vestiges of dim antiquity; a romantic strength of situation; and the wonders of the modern engineering art, each in a high degree, and all combining to form a picture of extraordinary brilliancy and loveliness. Travelling through a tame, fertile country, you suddenly find yourself beside a ravine of a thousand feet in depth, the bed of a river (the Saarine); on the opposite precipice of which an *old-world* town huddles and crouches; its churches alone seem bold to raise themselves

towards heaven ; its grey angular walls, low square watch-towers, creeping Jesuits' colleges, look as if they were painfully exposed on the steep bank they surmount, and actually craved the shade of woods long cut down, which had left them naked to the staring eyes of modern generations. Your first practical query is, how you are to reach the town, —so modest in grey antiquity—on the opposite side of the gulf ; but almost as soon as the difficulty is presented, it is solved ; for lo ! a net-work, light as if spider-spun, seems floating in the air, and on your approach you find it denotes a bridge suspended over the chasm, substantial as the rocks that hold it, and airy as a fantastic German poet's lightest fancy. Our suspension bridges—even that of the Menäi—are vulgar and ponderous things compared with it ; not only is the span of its suspension larger, and the height from the stream a third greater, but the absence of all visible buttress, and of all assistant arches, leaves the magical effect more perfect. You enter on it, and another kindred wonder of art appears, not so vast, but still more beautiful ; for a ravine, opening to the left, yawns, walled by yet loftier banks,—and across it, and above you, high in air, floats another bridge, of even lighter construction, which, diminished in the distance, might be thought the path-

way of fairies. Art seems to have caught the beauty of the scenes it was privileged to sport in, and to cast its own rainbows over the deep valleys.

Having passed the first bridge, and entered the town, we found it a quaint old place, the topmost heights occupied by low collegiate buildings, which are connected with the streets below by narrow flights of steps, which the figure of a portly priest often fills and darkens ; with rows of shops, reminding us of Chester, and trees looking brown in the market-place. The church of St. Nicholas is the principal structure—a handsome Gothic pile, swelling with the organ of European repute ; with a portal illustrated by such strange figures, as I can scarcely believe were ever assembled even in a dream. They represent the Day of Judgment ; adorable attributes are caricatured in a manner one dares scarce think of : the opening of hell is signified by a pig's mouth, vomiting flame ; angels flutter all wings ; devils are clothed with pigs' heads ; and a process of weighing souls is represented, not individually, but in masses, a number being placed at once in the scale of Eternal Justice, while a devil hangs on slyly, to weigh them down ; how assorted, Sir Thomas Browne himself could scarcely guess. Such a representation—not the conception of some gloomy fanatic, whose Night



Thoughts, being more like hideous phantasms even than Dr. Young's, are expressed in a terrible old print—a work elaborately and vividly carved in marble, in the vestibule of a noble church, under the control of a learned body—bespeaks a debasement of the clerical mind, I can scarcely understand under any form of the Christian Faith. An attempt to render the spiritual grossly palpable; fearful to the lowest cowardice of the dullest sinner, I can understand; but to blend it with absurdity so debasing as this, and to embody it in sculpture, with the assent of a learned clergy, is to me a moral wonder. I can conceive some half-crazed enthusiast, so haunted by terrors of “Judgment to come” as to find relief in expressing them in grotesque and fanciful extravagance; but the deliberate sanction of such a work is scarcely to be explained, except by that which one would not impute even to the Jesuits—a disbelief in the awful realities it debases.

Having dined luxuriously at the *table d'hôte* of the hotel, which concluded at two o'clock, we were invited by our host to join a party which he was making up to hear the great organ; a gratification which may be enjoyed, when eleven or twelve can be collected to pay a franc a piece for the benefit of the organist. We thought it was not quite

reverential to open the church for such a purpose ; but recollecting that we do the same thing in England on a greater scale, assented, and took our seats with a congregation of a dozen persons, whose admission fee, with ours, had been “ added to the dinner bill, by way of rider.” The organ is a huge edifice of bright pipes, filling the back of a gallery which occupies the entire breadth of the church, and at first threatened to rend its roof with a tempest of sound, which, however, softened occasionally into thrilling sweetness. The performance, which lasted about three quarters of an hour, comprised three or four pieces of sacred music, but closed (how consistently with the sacredness of the building I will leave our own Deans and Chapters to judge) with a portion of the incantation scene of *Der Freischütz*, which only wanted my old friends, the owl with fiery eyes, the lizards, toads, serpents, and spectral pack of hounds, to attend on an authentic casting of the seventh bullet. Some of the gentler passages—expressive of pleading, wailing, throbbing, pitying, exulting,—seemed so instinct with human feeling, that I could not believe, until assured to the contrary, that the sounds were entirely those of an instrument, but thought that the voices of women or children had been employed to aid the effect ; but the more

boisterous passages were much too powerful for the area of the church. I never before so fully understood the force of Pope's thankfulness for Man, that Nature did not

—— "thunder in his opening ears,
And stun him with the music of the spheres :"

for surely the spheres could not make more noise than that which yet rings in those ears which were almost split by the famous organ of Freyburg.

We reached Bulle at the delicious hour of sunset ; and a fine sunset can scarcely be enjoyed in a more delightful spot—the opening of a semicircular valley, bounded by green undulating hills, rising into grey rocky summits. We had been informed by our host at Berne, that by quitting this place very early in the morning we might reach Vevay in time for the first steam-boat returning to Geneva ; but we were induced to relax in our morning diligence by the counter-statement of the *garçon* at Bulle, that no steam-boat now called at Vevay till the afternoon ; and, relying on the last information as the most authentic, started at six instead of five o'clock, and "just arrived in time to be too late." When we reached the top of the hill where, far below, the town of Vevay, the lake, and mountains beyond it, burst on the

view, we saw—justifying our Bernese intelligence—a little black speck, just emerging from the extreme head of the lake, soon growing to the size of a spider, and making the still blue water quiver, as with an insect's wing, which we first guessed, and then ascertained, to be that steamer, the existence of which had been denied, and which now was approaching the town. Should we be in time to meet it? At first, measuring the water and land with the eye, we thought it possible; we were already on the descent to Vevay; but to quicken the pace of the *voiturier* was as impossible as to retard that of the steamer; and we soon gave up the hope as lost. The descent to Vevay is now, indeed, like “reading” in the Spelling-Book, and everything else, “made easy;” but it is also made all but endless; for the road twists so tortuously, and *angles* so sharply, that it extends the space actually traversed from one mile to four, consoling the traveller, however, by magnificent views of the finest part—indeed the only very fine part—of Lake Lemman, as its breadth is developed, and its shores expand before him. I am afraid the little innocent steamer was a spot in our prospect: we saw it approach the shore; we lost it for a few minutes beneath the town while it took in some wiser tourists; we followed it with longing

eyes, when it emerged ; and, before we lost sight of it at our last turn, it was some miles beyond us on its homeward way. We made the best of matters, which were not very bad after all ; drove to the Hotel of the Three Crowns, which is more like a palace than an inn ; and consoled ourselves by taking a *déjeuner à la fourchette* in a splendid saloon, looking directly on a terrace of grass and flowers, and beyond it, upon the lake ; a position not the most unhappy in this world. We learned from the master of the hotel that the next steamer would call, on its way to Geneva, at two o'clock ; but that it would soon pass on its course to the head of the lake : so we embraced the opportunity of going thither, and of seeing the celebrated Castle of Chillon, and the scenes which had place in Rousseau's heart, and are celebrated in Lord Byron's stanzas. Our host was said to be an Englishman ; if not, he deserved to be one ; for he facilitated our wish to depart as readily as he welcomed us ; and not only sent us from his own garden-stairs, in his own boat, to the steamer, but told us, in the hearing of the boatmen, not to pay them anything, for which they muttered some wishes, unlike blessings, on his devoted head, and for which we were proportionally grateful, as there are few things in travelling more tiresome

than the obligation of pondering on the *honorarium* which may satisfy the unliquidated claims of the subordinate contributors to our pleasure. The surly boatmen did not venture even to look a demand, as we stepped up the side of the steamer, any more than if they had been servants of a railway, in the face of those agreeable commands, "to give no money, on any pretence, to anybody" but the Company, which I hope will soon become parcel of the law of nations, "all the world over!"

Received on board the steamer, we rapidly approached the head of the lake—towards the great gorge of the Rhône crowned with snowy Alps—the chief of which, the Dent du Midi, sent up its enormous ivory tusks, unclouded, into the skies. When we stopped at Villeneuve, the queer little town at the extremity of the water, we were informed that we might have a boat to visit Chillon, and rejoin the vessel on her return; so, committing ourselves to four stout rowers, we passed the Hotel Byron—a very showy hotel, which overlooks the subjugated prison, and exults in a name which shows how liberally the world rewards the scorns which a lordly poet has condescended to cast on it—and were safely landed close to this illustrated cage of ancient tyranny. Our visit was brief—limited by the stay of the steamer

at Villeneuve—but long enough to impress me with a belief that the scene is almost as despicable as dismal. It is not a place to fear, or admire, or love, or even hate—but simply to *dislike*. Instead of dark ponderous towers, indicating the ancient predominance of might over virtuous constancy, suggestive of power and heroic suffering, I saw a squalid building of white-washed brickwork, prodigal in unpicturesque angles, and surmounted by low pepper-box turrets, having the air of a provincial house of correction or a union workhouse; and had I descried it rising from a tract of poor, cold, level land in England, I should have assumed it to be one of the products of the philosophy of Somerset House. As we approached it, I observed in a large mouldy division of the wall, an inscription which would scarcely have been found on one of those abodes of poverty—the words “Liberté et Patrie,” encircled by a flaring green wreath—like an outline painted for the reception of coloured lamps on the night of a royal birthday. If anything could have added to the sense of discomfort with which I surveyed the “dreary pile,” it would have been this tawdry inscription—which, if the walls enshrined the scene of some great self-sacrifice, the execution or long captivity of some hero, whose example had animated the heart of a

country with resolution to resist oppression to the last—would not be needed to tell the sight-seeing world to admire! Such an invitation seems like making the most of national materials—prison and patriotism—ticketing and labelling them for show; and would not be adopted by a “nation of shopkeepers,” who, if they know the worth of money, know also what is above it, and who would not thus coin their history into half-crowns by tricking out the miseries of old times in the affections of the new. The interior did not belie the threat of the outside; its upper chambers, some of which are used as depositories for arms, being low white-washed rooms, looking like the rooms of an unaired barrack, more fit for teasing than torturing; and the dungeon, which is the chief attraction, scarcely sinking to the dismal. It is merely a long, damp, arched room—not below the lake but just at the level of its waters—lighted, as well as many a knight’s chamber in the turret of a Border castle, by low narrow slits in the walls, and looking over the lake; comfortless enough no doubt; but still, not suggesting the notion of a tyranny which made imprisonment torture. Through one of these openings, we saw the lovely little island to which Lord Byron alludes, with its three trees set in blue water like a flower-bed—a

fairy nest—which might soothe a captive's tedious hours, if he could see it; but he has cruelly diminished the amount of sunbeams which find their way through this opening, and has heightened his effect by shutting up the others. I must, however, vindicate the poet's accuracy as to the number of pillars—"Seven columns murky and grey"—to which Mr. Murray appends a note, asserting "there are only five"; a curious instance of an erroneous attempt by a very accurate narrator of facts to correct a very unscrupulous weaver of fancies:—for, unless my eyes have deceived me, the poet is right; the columns asserting "We are seven," as pertinaciously as the immortal child in Wordsworth.

After we had been duly shown through all the visible rooms, edified by the sight of a beam which once assisted at executions, and, perhaps, some other toys of tyranny, we were "discharged, paying our fees;" regained our boat, and rejoined the vessel now in full steam for Geneva. I gazed on the scenes among which Rousseau has placed the few incidents of his eloquent but sickly romance, among which the "Hotel Byron" now towers, and the interest of which is weakened, if not distorted, when they are contemplated through the medium of Lord Byron's praise. The fictious

of Rousseau's brain, discoloured as they are by sophistry, vindicate a truth in our experience from the intense feeling with which the author himself regards them ; while even the physical realities of this scenery lose their individuality, while the poetical commentator forgets them in himself, and, professing to interpret their spirit, only develops his own. Lord Byron, amid the many-coloured mockeries of his life, wished to be thought the mournful enthusiast which Rousseau was ; but the difference remains between a flaming reality and a phosphoric illusion. It was natural for Rousseau, familiar with the village of Clarens and the Rocks of Meillerie, to take them for the scenes of his story ; but there is no truth in the elaborate stanzas of Lord Byron, which, passing by the influences which genius can shed abroad on external nature, "peopling it with affections," represent these spots as peculiarly the home of love, having "a sound, and sense, and sight of sweetness." True, here, "the Rhône has spread itself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne ;" but surely the opening of the wide gorge of a large turbid river, too marshy to allow an approach even within the sound of its ripple, and the white irregular pinnacles of the Dent du Midi, rising above dark

bare mountains, noble as those features are, do not suggest the luxurious bower in which "early Love his Psyche zone unbound, and hallowed it with loneliness." Clarens has *no* aspect of the "birthplace of love;" it is a long, dull, bricky village, stretching along the breast of a scantily-wooded hill—steep enough for weariness but not for romance. Its trees do *not* "take root in love," at least they do not display any fruits of such sweet nurture—"all things are not here of love." They are open, arid, uninviting—suspended between ugliness and grandeur—but having no touch of loveliness except that with which Rousseau's sentiment has tinted them. The whole scene—lake, rocks, and mountains, is one which may inspire great thoughts—thoughts tending to brace and strengthen the sinews of the mind, not to relax them in voluptuous weakness; attractions the reverse of those with which the English poet has arrayed it.

After passing Vevay, we found the shores of the lake diminish in interest; for though the hills are sometimes lofty, they slope from the water to tame summits. Along one of these the city of Lausanne appeared, not striking as a picture, surveyed from the lake, but nobly placed for commanding prospects. We stopped at the landing-place opposite

to it for some time, to discharge and to take in passengers ; time enough to call to mind the great names associated with it, though not to ascertain the localities immediately connected with them. There is, it seems, an Hotel Gibbon here, partly standing on the site of that garden in which the Historian took his evening walk, after writing the last lines of the work to which many years had been devoted ; a walk which alone would have hallowed the spot, if, alas ! there had not been those intimations in the work itself of a purpose which, tending to desecrate the world, must deprive all associations attendant on its accomplishment of a claim to be dwelt on as holy ! How melancholy is it to feel, that intellectual congratulation which attends the serene triumph of a life of studious toil, chilled by the consciousness that the labour, the research, the Asiatic splendour of illustration, have been devoted, in part at least, to obtain a wicked end—not in the headlong wantonness of youth, or the wild sportiveness of animal spirits, but urged by the deliberate, hearted purpose of crushing the light of human hope—all that is worth living for, and all that is worth dying for—and substituting for them nothing but a rayless scepticism. That evening walk is an awful thing to meditate on; the walk of

a man of rare capacities, tending to his own physical decline, among the serenities of loveliest nature, enjoying the thought that, in the chief work of his life, just accomplished, he had embodied a hatred to the doctrines which teach men to love one another, to forgive injuries, and to hope for a diviner life beyond the grave; and exulting in the conviction that this work would survive to teach its deadly lesson to young ingenuous students, when he should be dust. One may derive consolation from reflecting that the style is too meretricious, and the attempt too elaborate and too subtle, to achieve the proposed evil; and in hoping that there were some passages in the secret history of the author's heart, which may extenuate its melancholy error; but our personal veneration for successful toil is destroyed in the sense of the strange malignity which blended with its impulses, and we feel no desire to linger over the spot where so painful a contradiction is presented as a charm.

With far different feelings I called to recollection that here John Philip Kemble passed the last six years of his life, realising that wish expressed with such curious felicity in Sir Walter Scott's Address, which he delivered on bidding

adieu to the Edinburgh stage—in which he hoped to enjoy

“ Some space between the theatre and grave ;
That, like the Roman in the Capitol,
I may adjust my mantle ere I fall ;”—

a wish to be echoed by every one engaged in busy and anxious life—the more appropriate and affecting in the lips of a retiring actor, not because the exercise of his art is less innocent than the pursuit of the severer professions, but because being associated with the most radiant of intellectual recreations, it presents the most direct contrast to the stillness of the grave. Even at this distance of more than a quarter of a century, the majesty of form and action which “disturbed, delighted, raised, refined,” my own opening manhood, lives before me so vividly, that I can scarcely realise the belief that the frame which partly was, and partly wrought those wonders, is now mouldering in a cemetery of the hill, on the slope of which I am gazing. The sound of that voice, which it was the fashion even for admirers to deplore as feeble and husky, yet trembles around my heart, as when it fluttered in its meditative gentleness among those images of pensive decay, which retain the royal murderer within the

sympathies of humanity, by the common sentiment of declining years, when his "way of life has fallen in the sear—the yellow leaf." I still behold the marble effigy of the Roman philosopher, sculptured by Addison, endowed by his genius with heroic energy, and redeemed by the touch of affection, as his Cato stepped forth from the group of his despairing friends, to receive the news of the death of his son:—the passionate eagerness of his inquiry, when his fear suggested that Marcus had fled before the sudden terrors of the revolt; the enforced composure with which he listened to the narrative of the youth's bravery and his fall; and the triumph of nature over systems and language, in the broken, heart-breaking utterance of the words, "*I'm satisfied!*" at once realising to the young student the image of Roman majesty that had floated dimly before him, and commending it to his heart by an outbreak of fatherly love, not the less true because the historian has not recorded, nor the poet conceived it. The gracious allowance for the weary boy Lucius, fallen asleep over his instrument, yet redeems the stern Brutus from the cold pride and the low scorn which Shakspeare has attributed to him, and which his knowledge of Portia's death neither justifies nor explains. I still shrink beneath

the eagle-eyed disdain with which, in him, Coriolanus received the proposition of Aufidius, that he should return to Rome in safety, imagining, as his preferable lot, himself howling to his foe in battle for mercy, while he cowered over the image which his passion had conjured up for a moment, like a bird of prey over its victim ; still witness his outspread arms, and generous exultation, while he claimed for his safeguard a “a bosom void of blame;” still behold his arm dashed up towards heaven, as with the old love of country rushing back on his heart, at the insulting charge that the Romans were the seed of outlaws and robbers, he exclaimed—“The seed of Gods !”—still thrill with the exquisite change from indignation flashing with the remembrance of the injustice by which he had suffered, at the old familiar thought of the very forms under which it was wrought, in the words “giddy factions” to an excusing fondness ; still glow and tremble at the last majestic action, of fluttering the Volscians in Corioli—even as on the night of 25th June, 1817, when he closed, with a decision befitting his own Roman style, his scenic life. No temptation, no entreaty, no fond lingering regrets, enticed him back for a single night to renew the dream-like splendour of theatrical existence ; he laid it

down once and for ever, and those memories in which it yet lives are fading fast after him. There will soon be few who will remember him or his majestic sister; the living sense of her greatness will soon be sought only, amidst some recollections of remote childhood, where figures of maternal dignity and queenly sorrow may stand out amidst the glooms of years; where the "likenesses of kingly crowns" may yet hover over the agonised brow; till some may only see "an arm, and some a hand, and some the "waving of a gown," as the tragic vision slowly and reluctantly vanishes! I know of no feeling so full of the consciousness of the perishable nature of all the grandeurs of this life, as that which struggles to embalm for a few years longer, those august presences in which the forms of heroic greatness, and the intensity of passions hushed only in death, lived before us, and which wrestles with the conviction that even the frames of those at the call of whose genius buried majesties "burst their cerements," are now but "the quintessence of dust," and our thoughts following the train—the waning shadows of shades! It is, however, a consoling thought, that the associations connected with the race of Kemble are not yet without a living witness—to give intimation to the younger part of this generation of the noble

outline of feature, the high courtesy, the "learned spirit of human dealing," which, once exhibited by members of one family, shed life and beauty on the scene; and to quicken the recollections of its happier elders. While the younger brother yet survives, to bid those graces linger in tones of subdued sweetness, and enable us to erect an ideal stage on which chivalrous shapes breathe heroic passions, we may apply to the genius of his race those exquisite words he has so often breathed over the entranced loveliness of Juliet—

"Thou art not conquer'd ! Beauty's empire yet
Is crimson on thy lips, and in thy cheeks ;
And death's pale flag is not advanced there !"

We reached the quay of Geneva as the evening light was waning; and I cherished some hope that, as many of our fellow-passengers had left Geneva that morning, to make the voyage of the lake in the steamer, who were stopping unchallenged on shore, we should escape the demand of our passport, and one obstacle to our departure. But I was mistaken; neither twilight nor confusion availed us; by some intuition, which I cannot fathom, a stiff, stolid man, in buckram, stationed on the steps, recognised us for strangers, demanded our passport, and of course received it. We hurried on to our old quarters at the Crown; they were

full. The great Hotel des Bergues was a long way off, and that was probably still more crowded ; so, after following a *commissionnaire* up two staircases, to be repelled by a similar answer, we found a resting-place at the Hôtel de l'Europe, which, we were told, "commanded a view of the lake ;" and so it did, if you only stretched your neck far enough out of the topmost attic-window ; but it was more familiar with the figures of market-carts and butchers'-stalls, which occupied an else vacant piece of dirty ground before it. The landlord, however, was really disposed to oblige us ; and speaking good English, was soon made acquainted with our eagerness to proceed to Chamouni, and heartily aided our wish. Under his auspices, while supper was preparing, we engaged a convenient gentleman, who undertook to provide us with a carriage and horses, which should start at five for St. Martin ; and to remove all impediments, by procuring our passport from the Genevese police, and obtaining the signature of the Sardinian Consul. Thus far we seemed to prosper beyond our hopes. I slept lightly, in readiness to start up in a moment for Chamouni, and welcomed at four the knock of the brawny porter, who thrust into my room a huge flaring yellow dip, and a passport. While I was dressing in a joyful hurry,

which rather impeded my purpose, it occurred to me that it would be as well just to examine the document, and see that the Sardinian receipt for the four francs had been duly inscribed; when, confusion to my hopes! I found the flimsy and fatal paper was the Prussian passport of some other gentleman, whose name I could not decipher, substituted for mine, which was a Foreign-office passport, embracing my family! Huddling on my clothes, in a vexation which I felt to be comical, I flared and fumed about the staircases and passages of the house, to find some one to whom I might impart my perplexity; at last I found the drowsy porter, and after stammering out wild English and an impotent attempt at French, at last by pantomimic action made him understand it. The poor fellow seemed very sorry, though not at all to blame; and awakened his master, who was very sorry too; got up directly, and did the best that could be done for us. He perceived at once that the clerk at the police-office had delivered out the wrong document, which had been taken, without examination, to the Consul. Two things, therefore, were to be done before our release could be achieved—the procurement of the true passport from one office, and its signature at another; and, as the police-office did not open

till nine, and the Consul would not be astir till ten, our departing, so as to reach Chamouni before night, seemed hopeless. To increase our annoyance, the carriage appeared duly, as the clock struck five. The morning was lovely ; but our consolation was to gaze at the vision of Mont Blanc, which we had never before seen from Geneva, and which now appeared in the clear morning sky, with a pale saffron rim around its snowy tops—a beautiful, but puzzling phenomenon—at once seeming far off, and yet almost over us. While we stood admiring, and growing reconciled to this passport-vexed world, we were apprised by our worthy host that he had succeeded in the first step, having awakened the careless clerk, and opened the Geneva Office, and that he had sent up to the Consul's house, in hope that he, too, would condescend to awake and sign. He even suggested that we should set out, in the hope that we might meet the messenger, as his road from the Consul's would join ours at the Porte de Rive ; and as by doing so we *seemed* to be doing something, we complied, and proceeded in or with the carriage to the Porte de Rive, where we had an agreeable side-view of the narrow dirty street leading to the Consul's abode. Here we waited an hour—a very long hour, although it was diversified by seeing the

lads in blouses, and the lasses in neat boddices, flocking in from the country to market, with heaps of vegetables on their heads ; and by running up the street to see if the messenger was coming, and back again ; until, just as the neighbouring clock struck seven, the passport appeared, all right ; and, proceeding onwards towards Bonneville, we soon forgot all our annoyances, in the enjoyment of the soft air of a delicious day ; of the scenery, which to me was even better than new ; and the assurance that we should sleep at Chamouni.

We breakfasted, of course, at Bonneville ; and the coincidence vividly recalled to recollection the delightful hours we spent, illustrated by the same refreshment, just two years ago. The days were as like each other as two summer days could be—equally bright, and hot, and clear—or, this, if possible, was the clearer ; our appetites were keener by the two hours' delay at Geneva in the now almost forgotten matter of the passport ; but there was not the same enjoyment of the time, nor anything like it. It seems as if the pleasures of this world, even when the intellectual and the sensuous are blended, would never bear attempted repetition ; to enjoy one series of sensations once, is all that is usually permitted to Man. Almost all *encores* are failures, whether of song or situation ;

the wish to hear, or experience again, ungratified, is better than its fulfilment, with the exception, however, of scenery, in which "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." Perhaps the inferiority of any recurrence of a pleasant incident to its original, arises in part from our expecting a similarity of minute circumstances, which never recurs, and feeling disappointed that "another" is not "the same." On the present occasion, we arrived just before the *diligence*, which breakfasts here *à la fourchette*—no doubt the great event in the landlady's day—and we were obliged, not only to wait till towards its close, but to witness it, which was by no means an agreeable preparative for our own. The coach passengers consisted of one party of five, all equally disposed to eat and to talk ; and they did both so marvellously, that the performance would have been remarkable, if confined to either. There was a stout, thick-set, middle-aged man, with black hair and beard, who seemed to be the director of the journey, two ladies, and two wild-looking youths ; all the males very shabbily dressed, and having the appearance of a low order of shopkeepers, whom, at first, it was pleasant to regard as enjoying so glorious a holiday as a trip to Chamouni, whither they were bound ; but when the serious eating commenced, it took away

all our sympathy and our own appetite with it. We fell in again with the same party at St. Martin, and they were then actually eating another hearty meal—raw pigs’-feet, and other atrocities—by way of refreshment from the labour of admiring some of the loveliest scenery of the world. I trembled lest we should encounter them, in their eating hour, at Chamouni; but that misfortune was spared us.

If, however, our breakfast at Bonneville fell short in enjoyment of its precursor, our ride thence to St. Martin more than equalled the first. The freshness of novelty—the shock of surprised delight—were wanting; but we were better prepared to understand and appreciate the infinite beauties of detail, which are here sufficient to expand, and expanding to heighten the general impression of greatness, even after many visits. The road from Bonneville to Cluses presents a singular and beautiful contrast of dark rocky mountains on its right, and the Môle on its left, which rises out of a narrow fringe of shrubs, or trees diminished to shrubs by the magnitude of the associated objects, to the height of nearly six thousand feet—a regular pyramid—clothed to the top with short grass, as bare of trees and as smooth of turf as an English down, except that here and there a single

tree makes a dark dot, which might be a furze-bush or clump of wild flowers. It is a pastoral giant—a throne on which an enormous Pan might find a fitting seat—an earthborn prodigy. It is a variety very rare in Switzerland; for though “riches fineless” are often cast into the lap of the sternest grandeur in her valleys, this contrast of a dull, sober, mountain, excelling in height the rocky precipices which confront it, and holding divided empire in the mind with their dark sublimity, is rare and strange, and produces an impression of its own, as a Cobbett might do among a throng of romantic poets. Turning sharply from it at Cluses, and passing through the deep alleys of that old place, wedged in between its impending hills, you enter the pass which opens on St. Martin, and which, on mature deliberation, I prefer to any of the other glorious mountain defiles I have had the happiness to traverse; at least when I regard it with reference to its position as the vestibule to the Alpine Temple of Savoy. The *Via Mala* is more astounding as a mere slit in one mass of mountain, changed, by human power, from a gulf to gaze down upon, into a road, and then endowed in its recesses with the freight of human delight and wonder. The ascending valley from Bellinzona to Airolo is timbered with nobler

trees, and made alive by a lovelier stream. The corresponding descent of the Reuss has more majesty in the sculptured bed of the river, and its waters are possessed with a nobler fury than those of the Arve. The Munster Thal has a more dazzling alternation of narrow pine-clad alleys with lovely circles of bright verdure. The Hollenthal has more delicate air of fairy seclusion, and its slender pinnacles of rock, its sparkling water, and radiant trees break into daintier extravagances of beauty ; but for the interweaving of the elements of the majestic with those of the lovely—the fusion of beauty in greatness—where the most exquisite details not merely fill up the vacancies of grandeur, but are themselves of grandeur's essence—not confused and contrasted with each other, but all aiding by infinite gradations to produce one glorious whole—no pass which I have seen approaches it. Unlike most mountain passes, its course is almost on a level ; like a stately corridor, it widens regularly as its mountain buttresses increase in elevation ; until, when it has attained a considerable expanse, the walls of rock on the right are wreathed up into the mighty Aiguille Varens, a grotesque figure crowning its ridge, in shape as if an elephant “ did his proboscis wreath to make men sport,” over the entrance to the region

of Mont Blanc; just exhibiting, by way of flag or signal, one huge patch of snow at its side. Below this giant fantasy of nature, and the turreted rocky wall which stretches beside it, the earth seems almost to bound from the rock, with the life and passion of water, springing downwards in large rounded masses of verdant and flowery pasture, and then rushing by steep slants, covered with woods, to the level meadows through which the Arve foams—a broad milk-white stream, with ice-born power, which would almost mar the loveliness it feeds, but that it is bosomed in the coppices that run sportively along its margin. To make amends for the turbid character of the Arve, from the hills on the left gush unnumbered fountains of the purest water, sometimes darting from on high among the brushwood and gemming it with a mimic shower; sometimes falling buried in the wood beneath which they gurgle, till they rush into a clear basin by the pathway side; sometimes starting first into life at your very feet, and glistening along the road-side, till they find some channel across it to the river. Hence, no doubt, the exquisite verdure which luxuriates through the floor of the valley, along which the road stretches like a garden-path, beneath a succession of orchard bowers. Traverse it, as we did, in hottest midday,

when the mountain walls scarcely cast a shadow on the road, and its unparched greenness will be a perpetual wonder ; it nestles in golden fruitfulness ; and almost every opening between its trees laden with apples or plums, shows a glimpse of a five or six acre farm and its dove-coloured homestead—space enough to live and die in ! The beautiful cascade d'Arpenaz, which springs into its life and death from the left-hand heights, is not singular here in its fantastic grace ; it is only the fairest representative of the water-genius of the hills ; it has many unseen or half-seen fainter copies ; indeed, before we reached it, one rivulet sprang so like it into air, to be dashed so soon into similar diamond dust, that I doubted whether I did not then see, though with diminished power, the Queen of the Valley. When we reached the true cascade, however, it vindicated its supremacy ; it looked to me loftier, and its radiant dust more copious, than before, probably because the hill-stream came down in a greater volume ; and, as if to prove how poor all our fancies are compared with Nature's facts ; as if to mock me for representing the watery dust shed on the air as the frailest of her wonders ; behold now on the steep rock-pillar that juts just beyond the fall, an emptier, fainter, less substantial appearance—the shadow of that

very dust—gone—for the rock is in shade and reflects it no more, and Fancy is foiled even in her own region of middle air by Reality! We soon reached our old resting-place of St. Martin, and the full view of the snowy wonder of Europe—now more impressive because far better understood than at first—but as we hoped and believed to be soon even better known, and to rise hereafter on the mind with some nearer semblance of its true majesty.

As the day was far spent, we determined to take decisive means for pressing onwards; and, instead of ordering one *char-à-banc*, which carries three, and trying to secure one place in another, we ordered at once two *chars-à-banc* for Chamouni. The liberality of this order, instead of causing delay, ensured its immediate performance. We heard the landlady's voice, shrill, yet surely, with something of the angel in its tone, repeat to the ostler the purport of those delightful words, not spoiled by being rendered into French, and the ostler caught hers up and sent them back again with a hoarser sweetness. "*Two chars-à-banc for Chamouni!*" What an echo do these words raise in the heart while I write them! One required would not have been at hand—must be waited for; but two were just ready; and, before we had quite

finished one bottle of the same red wine which had refreshed us here before, and which bore repetition better than the Bonneville breakfast, they were announced; and a minute did not elapse before the *chars-à-banc* were bearing us on the crowning stage of our journey.

We despatched our two young people in the lightest carriage, with the least luggage, that they might secure rooms for us, as our prompt departure had quickened other tourists, who were resting at St. Martin; or gave an *impetus* to the stable establishment; for we observed other *chars-à-banc* in active preparation when we mounted ours; but my wife and I followed close behind, for a quarter of an hour, the happiest of human creatures. How could we be otherwise? The hot, cloudless day, was declining into golden evening—each minute sweeter than the last; the valley one undulating grass-plot, studded with fruit-trees, whence exuberant apples and plums dropped lay plenteously about the road; and the snowy tops, whose feet we were approaching, shot up at every turn from the wooded banks we were about to ascend, as if already close to us. Yet there came a speck on the evening's felicity—a speck?—a huge blot—in the shape of a thickset, black-browed, bullet-headed, black-eyed priest—like him of


Thomson, a "round, fat, and oily" priest, "all bright and glistening with unholy dew." He ran up to the driver of our slender vehicle, and intimated his pleasure to take a seat in it; the driver referred him to us; and we, thinking there would be more room for his Reverence in our first carriage, suggested that he might ask for a seat there, by our authority. He apparently did not understand us; for he fell back, instead of running forward; when I felt that, however unpleasant the addition to our party would be, it was our duty to submit to it, rather than offer a slight to a minister of religion, although his mode of faith was not ours. We, therefore, stopped the carriage, and called to him that we would make room—an invitation which he immediately accepted, and was presently squeezed into our *char-à-banc*, to the woeful crumpling of our carelessly-disposed wardrobe, and the discomfort of all that was squeezable in our composition. But this was not the worst: he began very glibly to talk French, which the lady understood, but I did not; and to which she felt bound, in courtesy, to reply; and as he spoke with the rapidity which seems natural to the language, I was afflicted with a discordant *jabber* close to my ears, of which I did not understand a word. Only think!—to have such

a silence—so solemn and sweet, that we scarcely breathed, lest we should disturb it—in such a scene—displaced by the pattering of French—it was hard to bear! We soon began to ascend the narrow, stony, winding, embowered road, which leads over the first range of hills, by the side of a basin, whence a lake has been stricken by a fall of stones, towards Servoz; and here I hoped that our priest would show mercy to the mules, if not to us, by descending, of which piece of very common humanity I gladly set him the example; but he kept his seat with smiling self-complacency; while I, finding in my consideration for the mules a present reward, walked now freely up the path, beneath the embracing boughs of its fruit-trees, from which the luxuriant meadows seemed to sink quite to the verge of the snow beyond them. The road next declines to the small, mean, delicious village of Servoz; and here the procession of *chars-à-banc* overtook me—for three others were now added to the train. Here I expected our priest would have left us, as he had only wished to ride “a little way;” but I found that he had informed our driver of his perfect satisfaction with his position, and of his intention to shorten a visit he had engaged to pay to a sick sister at Servoz, that he might avail himself of so


excellent an opportunity of visiting his brothers at Chamouni. I was puzzled what to do; I might have transferred my seat to the *char-à-banc*, which my niece and son occupied, but I thought this would seem a direct affront; to resume my own place, was to destroy the sweetness of an hour which might have no equal to succeed it "in unknown time;" so I took refuge in the middle course of "walking on;" and I did "walk on," with great spirit and success; though, at first, more chafed and vexed than I ought to have been by the continuance of the Catholic visitation. The robust Father little thought—"good easy man"—how much happiness he had marred, or I am sure he could not have thus clouded the fleeting earthly delight which a doomed heretic was permitted to revel in! He, no doubt, thought—if he thought at all—that he merely made us a little less comfortable during a ten-miles ride—not that he had marred three hours, worth the whole year. I walked stoutly on—"more like a man flying from that he fears, than seeking that he loves"—not in proper charity with the Roman Catholic faith. In this churlish mood, I could not help contrasting the Protestant and Catholic cantons,—the former all cleanliness, industry, and comfort—the latter, dirty, ill-cultivated, speckled in their loveliness by

cottages dark, rotten, tumbling down,—the difference so remarkable, that the crossing a bridge changes these indications of the morals and happiness of the people ; and thinking that if the priests employed the influence they unquestionably possess, in furtherance of objects which their education must have taught them to appreciate, the people who confide body and soul to them, could not continue so palpably below their neighbours, who till fields no more fertile. I confess my meditations at that moment were tinged with no affection for the Roman priesthood ; but I cannot now avoid the inference, arising from the premises that the Catholic priests in the Swiss cantons are culpably neglectful of the moral culture of their flocks,—that they do not teach industry or cleanliness ; for, if they urged the cultivation of these blessings, they would not be so deplorably wanting. As I walked on by the paths fringed with flowery shrubs, and grew at home with beauty, these Protestant thoughts lost their power ; and when I had climbed to a lofty cross, on a bit of common, blooming with heather like that of the Highlands, and saw the cavalcade of carriages so far below me, that I had an hour's good walking before the question of riding with the priest could arise, I cast my ill-humour to the winds, and went on my lonely and

lovely way in peace with the Catholic faith. The mountains closed in on the road ; it became steeper and narrower, and ascended into a succession of stony steps ; the pine-groves clasped it, extending upwards to an immense height, and downward precipitously to the river ; until, at last, the crown of the road was attained, and the first spire of the valley of my love, dark among the purple tints of the lower hills, became just visible to my eager eyes. Descending rapidly, I soon found myself directly beneath the lowest skirts of Mont Blanc, and at a sudden turn of the road, in immediate neighbourhood with the purest snow, against which the scarlet berries of the mountain ash, which often enriched the wild-wood, formed a delicious contrast. At the top of one of the path's eminences I stopped enchanted : a deep rose-coloured light suffused the floating curtain of snow, some of whose vast fields descended to the glacier near me—not a glimpse for a moment—it rested—slowly retreated from the skirts of the mountain upward, and marked out the round, small globe of white, which forms its highest top, by lingering there for some minutes after the domes and pinnacles which, from this point, seemed to equal or excel it in height, were left in cold, grey twilight. When I had walked till I came within a mile of the village of Cha-



mouni, my *char-à-banc* overtook me; I then resumed my place; was able to wonder how the beauty of the evening had seduced me to walk on so far, and, I believe, to play my part with sufficient good humour, to prevent the priest from suspecting that his visit had prolonged my walk. If "all's well that ends well,"—which cannot be quite true, unless where the *end* is *all*—then was all well with us; for we reached the Hotel de l'Union, just as the stars were appearing over the mountains, and as the eight o'clock supper or dinner was about to be served; shook hands heartily with our travelling companion, who commended us as his friends to the particular attention of the landlord; and took possession of chambers looking direct on Mont Blanc, with a perfect view of its cloudless top, and a planet, which seemed part of its retinue, almost resting upon it!




CHAPTER III.

A WEEK AT CHAMOUNI.


General description of the Valley of Chamouni—Cascade near Chamouni—The Glacier du Bossons—Mounting Ambition—The Montanvert—Resolution taken to attempt the Ascent of Mont Blanc—Conference with the “Chef” of the Guides—High Preparations—Final Arrangements—Day and Night before the Ascent—Guide’s breakfast—Ascent to the Glacier—Passage of the Glacier—The Grands Mulets—Sunset and Night at the Grands Mulets—Ascent to the Grand Plateau—Inglorious Return—Questions whether the attempt was justifiable, and whether it was required, answered—Walk to the Source of the Arveron.

HERE then we were, in the valley of Chamouni, to “rest and expatiate” for a week—our life apparently without the wrinkle of a care—in an atmosphere without a cloud, except when some light fleecy wreath just floated beneath a dome or pinnacle of Mont Blanc, as if in worship. Before I retrace our rambles within that enchanted region, and the risings and results of that busy ambition which stirred the tranquillity of my golden hours, I will endeavour to recall a general view of the scene—as we became acquainted with its features, by studying them with a loving industry, down to the moment when, from the Col de Balme, we gazed at it in parting.

The valley of Chamouni (to compare a very great thing with a very small one) resembles in shape the half of an almond-shell, a crescent bulged out in the centre, and running almost to a point at each extremity. On my former visit I regarded it merely as the area provided by nature for the perfect exhibition of Mont Blanc; and such is its great office in the economy of the majesties of the world; and to this office I still, as then, think it curiously adapted both by its positive attributes and its wants. The long level of its flooring, not wreathed into various beauty like most of the Swiss valleys; the predominance of the fir and pine on the skirts of its mountains over more vivid and various trees; and the dark austerity of the Breven, and its associated ridges opposite the glittering miracles of the great mountain, all tend to complete one single, severe, undying impression for the soul of the beholder. But when regarded in detail, this valley will be found endowed with charming characteristics of its own—a sparing grace—a frugally distributed loveliness—which gives it a homefelt interest unknown in valleys crowded and perplexed with beauty which “the sense aches at.” Three modest church towers rise from its bosom, each amongst its own cluster of dwellings, but each belonging



to the whole, and aiding in the consecration of this table-land among the mountains, which lies almost at a mountain height above the sea. Its space, except where occupied by roads; by its two soapy-coloured rivers; and by the streams that, rushing into them, intersect it like net-work, is chiefly occupied by small bright farms, each with its nest-like homestead; dotted sometimes with dark groves of trees, only now and then relieved by alder bushes and the dazzling gleam of the scarlet berries of the mountain ash. If you ascend the skirts of Mont Blanc, opposite the summit of the Breven, where the valley is broadest, a little to the left of the church and village of the Prieuré, the expanse of the valley presents a singular and very agreeable appearance, which may be contemplated from this position without any interruption of grander objects, all traces of snow being hidden. Directly before you, from beneath the shaggy peak of the Breven descends a black gully, up to which a bright tissue of farm-fields arises from the curving margin of the Arve, in soft regular swell, which forms the sole and slight exception to the flatness of the valley; and the whole presents the appearance of a fan ready for the hand of some gentle giantess, to whom Polyphemus might be a small foot-page. The river rims it with a broad edge



of waving white; the fields, a hundred at least, green, brown, yellow, of every gradation of tint, lie in expanded patch-work for its opened folds; dark pines edge the sides, and mark them almost evenly till they meet at the mountain foot; and the gully above, black as ebony, forms the handle which you might fancy the fair Brobdignagian eager to seize. The patches, though of unequal size, are almost all parallelograms, varying from the square to the strip, and evenly defined by their colours; and the cottages of the cultivators are embossed dots on the radiant picture. How cheerful it is! Human industry laughing in contentment at the wastes of eternal snow,—bespeaking a population as industrious as bees! Nothing, surely, could better relieve that tightness about the heart which mountain grandeur at first induces, than such a scene—so peaceful, yet so busy; softening without checking the greatest impulse of admiring wonder—which the snow-clad masses have awakened, and the next hour will renew! To the traveller ascending and descending the Montanvert, this fanlike aspect of the cultivated fields of Chamouni is presented in its happiest perfection.

The morning after our arrival, having lingered in agreeable uncertainty among the scanty groves of

dwarf trees which clustered on the margin of the Arve, we started, attended by a guide, to visit the cascade beyond the hamlet of Pelerins and the Glacier du Bossons. An hour's walk, through the field-paths which wind among the farms, and through the thin woods which skirt the nearest fold of Mont Blanc, brought us to a steep open space of hill-side common, clothed with scanty grass, coloured with faint tinges of pink heather, leading to those rocky precipices behind which the loftier declivities of the great mountain are concealed. Down a channel in the rock a stout rivulet rushes, then throws itself across a short perpendicular ledge, and meeting a hollow rock, inclined upwards, leaps high in air, and after forming a wide arch, falls into a chasm—its proper bed—a hundred feet below; a most brilliant *jet-d'eau*, of Nature's own invention. The effect is as beautiful as it is startling. The pure water which thus spurns the earth illumines the air with a million of drops, which take varying colours in the sunlight, and perpetually form, and break, and renew small rainbows on the pinnacles of stone that spring about its basin, while the water when it reaches in its descent the shade of the chasm, falls in a close column of crystal.

Hence, winding through meadows, corn-fields, and

groves, and crossing a broad torrent, which came raging from its imprisonment of ice in the glory of disenchanted life, we reached a chalet, perched on the mountain side, which commanded a view of a portion of the great glacier, which seemed floating down before us at the extremity of a steep ploughed field on which it bordered. We had been charmed by glimpses of its white wonders, as we threaded our upward way through the arches of tall trees, and the blossoming fretwork of shrubs, in delicious contrast with the dark or the vivid green; but now they were full before us. The section of that glacier which is visible, swelling out in its descent from the unseen wastes of snow above to the valley below, is far more beautiful than any I have seen; than the higher regions of the same glacier, which I afterwards traversed, or the floor of the Mer de Glace; far purer than the last, and broken into more exquisite shapes than either. It is perfect in itself—for the snow-fields above are only seen at the edge of its descent, like the water gleaming at the top of a cascade upon the eye beneath it; and the lower extremity, where the ice is always discoloured by its contact with the earth it displaces, is here hidden by a belt of pines. The piece of the glacier thus disclosed, presents a wilderness of fantastic shapes, all of the

purest white, purer than marble in its quarry,—slabs like altars, sharp pyramids, broken shafts of columns, spheres, crescents, all confused in the most lucid disorder, which might be the materials lavishly collected for a projected city of fairies. The only prototype I can discern for it in my own mind, is the image I received when, in early school days, I first read the *Æneid*, of incipient Carthage growing from facile marble and alabaster into massive grandeur, under the influence of its lovely and fated queen—an impression which a French picture in the Louvre imperfectly renewed. An order for some bread, and a bottle of the red wine of the country, which water and sugar rendered tolerable, secured for our ladies a resting-place beneath a rude porch of the *châlet* in front of the glacier, while my son and I, attended by the guide, toiled over the arid field to its margin, and climbed, with some difficulty, over the loose heaps of earth and stones which it brings down with it, or loosens at its sides, to walk among its pinnacles. Our distant impression of the stainless beauty of the icy chaos was not impaired by the closest inspection of its shapes ; and it was even heightened by the tints of the crevices, which run like serpents among the dazzling region—which at the rim are of very pale blue, and deepen as they descend into azure, and

are then lost in deep gloom ; and by the small sun-tinted icicles hanging down from the sculptured edge of the greater forms, like “young diamonds in their early dew.” The sun’s heat, which the ice-forms seemed not so much to defy as to rejoice in, soon drove us back to our ladies, with whom we gently strolled downward through the trees, casting many a glance at the radiant forms which gleamed more exquisite from their contrast with the green framework ; to the road, and thence to our hotel, which we reached in good time for the five o’clock dinner. This repast was followed by another delicious evening, during which we again saw the summit of Mont Blanc vindicate its supremacy over the Dôme du Gouté, and other its attendant tops, by retaining the crowning pink after it had quitted them ; and another night during which the stars shone over the watch-tower *Aiguilles*, without the intervention of even a fleece of cloud.

What could disturb tranquillity so deep? There were thoughts of restless ambition, which stirred this repose and awoke the fever in the heart. That “something still which prompts the eternal sigh”—the thirst not of happiness but of action, was not subdued amidst these silent solitudes. I gazed on the Dôme du Gouté and the summit;

and panted with a child-like longing to exchange the Platonic love of these celestial domes for a substantial acquaintance, and even to try the ascent to the highest summit. For many years I had been fascinated, almost haunted, by the idea of this enterprise; and had read every printed narrative of the attempt I could procure, from that of Saussure down to those of Jackson, Shervill and Auldjo, with an avidity I can scarcely explain. It was not the desire of a panoramic view from the summit, for in that it must be surpassed by many inferior elevations—nor (I think at least) the idler desire to boast, that I had stood on the highest ground in Europe; but a wish, amounting almost to a passion, to become familiar with the steeps and the recesses of the mountain of Europe, and to blend the sense of adventure with the enjoyment of the mightiest scenery. There is something in the influence of an object, a great and exciting object—not one requiring attention to minute details—like geology or botany—to which the discovery of grandeur and beauty is accessory, which puts a life into the heart of contemplation, and unites the animation of struggle with the embracement of images of the profoundest peace. The fatigues and the dangers attributed to the attempt increased its fascination,—not being asso-

ciated with scenes of violence but with the noblest images—the wide waste of snow, the avalanche, the chasm, the precipice—as if the mind, in the wrestle with the silent perils of the universe, could acquire some mysterious participation with its powers. Perhaps, also, the consciousness of being particularly unfitted for such an exploit; boasting no muscular strength; jaded with far other labours; and having been as much *untrained* for climbing and sliding as habits of town-life could make me; so that, if I should succeed, the sense of triumph would be enhanced, while my failure would be without disgrace. I looked on my chance of success as if I were deliberating on the purchase of a ticket in a lottery; the prize rose in estimation exactly in proportion to the chances against winning it; all reason and experience were against me; so “masterless passion,” which “sways us to its will in what it likes or loathes,” took the other side of the question, and vindicated its triumphant attributes. I taught myself to believe, that I might find some extraordinary strength in the bracing air of the upper region; the snowy wonders of the path might inspire me with strange animation; and if obliged to return, I should have acquired some knowledge of the way, and the conviction that I had not lost an

opportunity which might never recur. So I half resolved to set forward—with about as reasonable a hope of complete success as that with which Fortunio starts in the Arabian Tale to procure the fairy gifts for the golden-haired princess; but *he* succeeded in spite of all visionary fears; and why in this fairy land should not I?


All external circumstances tended to foster this desire as soon as I began to cherish it. Time, place, season, all cohered—if ever the ascent could be accomplished it was now. The weather was almost cloudless; it had been fine for many days, and seemed settled for many more; the upper regions of the mountain were reported to be in a state more favourable to the intrusion of human steps than had ever been remembered, in consequence of the quantity of snow which had fallen early in the year, and which had been hardened before the summer heat; and several attempts had been recently crowned with success. One had been completed this day by Mr. Nicholson, of Doctors' Commons, a guest of our inn, who, on his return, was greeted by repeated discharges of petards fired from the garden by our host. He had started the preceding morning; and arrived from the top not only in time to partake of the dinner at five o'clock, but in spirits and with

strength to enjoy the congratulations of the company, to whom he detailed most inspiring passages of his progress. He had been joined, among others, by the Abbé of the Prieuré, who had been tempted, by the peculiar felicities of the season, to ascend the mountain at the foot of which he had lived and ministered for many years, and who, on his return, was welcomed by reiterated volleys from all the hotels. Mr. Nicholson told us how the good man had performed the evening service before the party composed themselves to rest on the rocks of the Grands Mulets; and how impressive it was in that lofty solitude even to Protestant feelings; thus seeming at least to give the sanction of experience and piety to an enterprise which had been often represented as foolish if not criminal. Thus all things, except common sense and discretion—qualities, opposed to such temptations, much less than nothing—conspired to induce me to grasp at the fervent dream of past years; and when I found myself discussing the possibility of the attempt with the ladies, without encountering any prohibition or raising any apparent alarm, I almost resolved to make it.

Although thus dallying with the suggestions of mounting ambition, I did not lose the next day

in lofty speculation, but spent the morning with my party in a visit to the Montanvert, attended by all proper appliances of mules and guides, and acquired a knowledge of the facilities of the way which would enable us, if we should ever take it again, to dispense with both. Ascending the mountain path, fringed with brushwood to the pine grove, and winding through it among frequent traces of torrent ruin, I was chiefly delighted by the mapped out fields of Chamouni, which I have endeavoured to sketch, below me, and the spiral tower of the beautiful Aiguille du Dru, which at every interval of open slope rose before us with its soft cream-colour hue and shape of matchless elegance. Along this hill-side path you perceive no indication of ice or snow; the opposite ridge of the valley sinks, as you advance, from the black watch-tower of the Breven, to the *Roches rouges* surmounting the Flegère, and thence almost to pastoral tameness; and you have leisure to notice the small crimson strawberry peeping out from the roots of the dwarf shrubs and amidst loose stones, and the low purple flowers which almost *star* the paths. Thus cheered, and awed by the riot of the Arveron far below, which here has just issued from its native cave of ice, you come suddenly upon the Pavilion of the Montanvert—a low

strong-built cottage—and look directly down upon the frozen sea below it, as on a bay or pool almost circled by snow-capt rocks, while its crowning ornament, the Aiguille du Dru, rises immediately before you. We descended on the face of a steep bank to the ice, and walked on it for some distance, beside the stone which sheltered the first English visitors of the region. The ice, here unclothed by snow, was so painfully slippery, as to suggest doubts whether I could even pass the Glacier du Bossons, and this “gave me pause” in my half-formed scheme. As the day had too far advanced to render it possible to penetrate the recesses of the frozen road to the Jardin, we re-ascended to the Montanvert, where the best view of the icy vale was obtained. The scene here presented is, in shape, almost a circular basin or amphitheatre,—the onward course of the glacier being concealed by the folds of the rocks—and seems to my recollection to be imbued with even more beauty than grandeur; for its floor is formed of sheets of waving ice, which, except that it is broken here and there by the glistening blue of a crevice, has all the freedom of actual motion; the rocks circling it, splintered into fantastic varieties of summit, harmonize remarkably in colour with the ice, and are dwarfed by the dizzy



heights beyond them; and the Aiguille du Dru, rising in the shape of a cone of pale brown, looks like the spirit of beauty, shedding its influences on all beneath it. Such, indeed, was the beautiful predominance of the circular form, and so entire the absence of anything discordant, that I believe the picture was diminished to the eye by a sense of harmony, akin to that which breathes from the most perfect statues.

On our return we were overtaken by the variety of a sudden shower, pouring down like a water-spout from a single cloud, which, threatening a change of weather, seemed to destroy my wavering purpose; yet that shower fixed it. When I thought the scheme blasted, I felt the strong hold it had taken of me; and in my regrets for the opportunity lost, found irresistible reasons for embracing it when the possibility was renewed. This soon occurred; before dinner every cloud had passed away: the setting sun cast, if possible, richer hues, first of gold, then of pink, upon the lofty snows than ever; and as soon as they vanished, my resolution was taken; communicated; confirmed. One important consideration remained; my son, naturally desirous of sharing in an enterprise better suited to his years and experience than mine, with an earnestness befitting the

occasion, desired to share my fortunes. No intention of risking anything so precious in the service of the Genii of the mountain had entered my mind ; but I had persuaded myself that there was no risk for me, and I could not afford to lose that persuasion by confessing that there was danger for him : and then the thought that he was more likely to succeed than I ; that his success would compensate for my failure ; and that he might lift up his head higher at the *Montem*, among the plumes that make the little mound at Salt Hill wave like one gigantic helmet, for the elevation attained at Chamouni ; so I assented to his wish. Our landlord was deeply interested in his success by a remark of his mother—that if he attained the summit, seven hundred schoolboys would insist on visiting Chamouni to follow his steps, and make the fortune of the hotels. Seven hundred schoolboys—“ the first,” as he truly said, “ in the world,” following his example, might track a pathway to the summit, and put the mountain itself to school !


Being now “ settled and bound up, each corporal agent to this terrible feat,” I sought “ The Chef ” of the Guides, to hold solemn conference on the ways and means. He is the Lord Chamberlain, who licenses and regulates all such performances ; absolute over all the details and decorums

and costs of the expedition ; and generally finding subjects so obedient, as to prove worthy of the blessings of that best of all smaller governments, a well-administered despotism. When we sought him at his office, which is next door to “ a real chamois,” who is always at home—of course he was not at home, and for some time we looked for him in vain among the groups of inferior guides and mule-drivers, who were lounging in the twilight about the road and the openings of the narrow streets, diversified but not relieved by a sprinkling of English grooms, whose natural indolence was not diminished by an inability to converse with their fellow-stablers, and who stood about with their hands in their pockets, yawning with all their souls—the pictures of vulgar *ennui* ;—an assemblage abhorrent to the romance which was within me. At last one of the real guides, who had some suspicion of our purpose, and was anxious to procure an appointment on our staff, brought the Potentate to us. As soon as he understood our serious business, he “ with courteous action waved us to a more removed ground,” and leading the way from the throng of idlers, laid down his short pipe, and took his seat, on the dwarf wall of the churchyard, to give us audience. He was a thick-set, grave, middle-aged man, who,

though coarsely dressed in fustian trousers and a short shabby jacket, wore an air of authority ; and was obviously disposed to treat the projected ascent with that solemnity with which all Chamouni have conspired to invest it. He, however, strongly encouraged us to proceed ; assured us that the season was favourable beyond any in his recollection ; that the snow was never so accessible ; and, in answer to my inquiries whether the young gentleman would be equal to the effort, expressed his opinion in his favour, though he added that if he succeeded, he would be the youngest who ever had mounted so high : a suggestion which did not diminish the young gentleman's ardour for the trial. When, however, he came to question us, in his turn, as to the state of our wardrobe, it was found to be miserably deficient ; our boots were not only unfit for the ice, but scarcely worthy to carry us to its margin, and our clothes were mere gossamer. Some things we might buy ; some we might borrow ; but shoes must be manufactured for us in the course of the next day ; for on the morning after that we proposed to set forth. The Chef looked awful ; but said he would see if it was possible, and if it was possible, it should be done ; and conducted us through a range of very respectable pigsties and less respectable cottages to a cell

of a shop where a begrimed cordwainer, looking like a genuine burgess of Stafford, held his state. He too, as many a Stafford cordwainer has done at first sight, shook his head and declared compliance impossible ; but, like many a Stafford cordwainer, he was not insensible to reason properly administered. The Chef explained that we were willing to pay handsomely ; and Crispin grew gentle, and took our measures, and promised the Mont Blanc shoes for the following evening ; and our pledged friend, as his Stafford kinsmen do, kept his word ; for soon after dinner on the next day he attended at the hotel with two pairs of shoes, such as I had never seen even in a dream—within, admirably fitted to the wearers—and without, rough with more hob-nails than the Senior Alderman, who has not passed the chair, counts in her Majesty's Court of Exchequer. Under the superintendence of our Chef, who now took us under his charge, as Tristram in *Quentin Durward* does "his gossips," we visited various small shops and procured wide outspreading straw hats, green veils, enormous worsted stockings (things to dream of not to tell), and borrowed green spectacles, which we were told were indispensable as protectors against the glare of the snow ; but which I found of no more use than those which formed Moses Primrose's immortal


purchase. Although we were desirous of keeping our purpose as secret as possible, to avoid being remonstrated with, or stared at, or pitied, the experienced eye of Mr. Nicholson discovered it in the manner in which our Chef resumed his pipe after he quitted us; and although he did not even know our names, felt such sympathy with our ambition to rival his own exploit, that he offered us all the aid his wardrobe could supply; so that before we went to bed we were supplied with various flannel habiliments, cloaks, and other appliances for the upper regions, if we should be so happy as to reach them. One of the *garçons* of the hotel, who had accompanied our new friend and shared his success, exhibited woeful marks in his eyes and face of the inclemency of the climate, which he accounted for, in his broken English, by saying, "It is very fine upstairs; very fine; but upstairs I lost my head." I gathered from his gesture, and finger pointed to the summit of Mont Blanc, visible from the window by which we were standing, that "*upstairs*" with him implied the greatest sublimity he could express in English, and meant the mountain-top; but the "loss of head" I erroneously attributed to some fearful aberration on a giddy precipice; but, when explained, it proved to refer to the loss of his



straw hat, which escaped from the fragility of its domestic ties on the very top of the mountain, whither he had been half dragged, half carried by the guides, and spindled down with a million revolutions into the vale of Aosta, leaving the poor youth with no protection against the glare of sun and snow beyond that which a pocket handkerchief could give. He had suffered severely ; but we were far past all warning ; and sending again for the Chef, before we retired to rest, received his sanction to the apparel our new and kind friend had provided for us ; and, by Mr. Nicholson's advice, left the selection of the guides unreservedly to the Chef's direction. We were to have four principal attendants apiece, each of whom was to receive a hundred francs if his client reached the summit ; seventy-five if he only reached the Grand Plateau ; and fifty if he only reached the Grands Mulets, the resting-place of the first day's journey :—prices raised since Dr. Hamel's attempt, when forty-eight francs for each guide was the sum agreed on ; but I think not a franc too much for the peculiar aid and comfort the guides render. These prices were independent of a gratuity of from ten to twenty francs more, which the aspirant, or patient, if satisfied with his guides (as he always ought to be), is expected to give to each. The Chef receives

nothing from the traveller ; but a handsome percentage on the pay of the guides, which gives him, no doubt, an interest in every expedition. Besides the regular guides, we were to be attended by two porters, to carry provisions and clothing as far as the Grands Mulets, who were to receive about twenty francs apiece, with an addition if we found it convenient to take them further. Provisions, a very important part of the arrangement, were to be supplied at his discretion, by the master of the hotel, who was perfectly acquainted with all that was desirable—or assumed to be desirable—for the sustentation and solace of travellers and guides. All matters being thus put in train, I went to bed to dream of all sorts of icy terrors ; waking at one time under the weight of an avalanche of a thousand tons of ice, and at another half way down a precipice, in a falling progress of a thousand fathoms.

The day which intervened “ between the acting of this dreadful thing and the first motion,” though not quite “ a phantasm, a hideous dream,” was still a lost day, and being an exceedingly beautiful one, I account the greatest loss I suffered for my rashness. The usual consequence of taking a decisive step followed ; fears and scruples multiplied ; and though they were silenced by the



real belief, which the event justified, that in the state of the snows, nothing was to be apprehended beyond fatigue, and the necessity of returning: still restlessness and languor spoiled the radiant hours, which it was thought imprudent to employ in any laborious exercise. My wife and I spent a portion of the morning on a grassy bank, scantily shaded, on the stony margin of the Arve; during which a pretty little ragged Savoyard boy peeped in at us, and having satisfied his curiosity, stationed himself among the stones and dust left by the river, and exhibited all the attitudes of weariness of a small "Exquisite," which, being as lazy as he, we idly watched. When we rose to go, the little fellow came forward, and held out his hand to be paid; as if he had earned something by lounging in our presence so long, though his plump figure bespoke no need of alms. The young idea of acquisition from strangers unfolds itself early here; a meanness which, I am afraid, English travellers have taught the lads and lasses of the valley. They do not beg, indeed, after the coarse fashion of the mendicants of the Bernese Oberland—arresting your steps, almost with menaces, and often exhibiting hideous deformities at which you shudder—but they display some prettiness in action or manner; offer you a draught of milk, or

some water from a spring ; or a bunch of flowers ; or, like our young posture-master, merely present themselves in any interesting attitude ; and then await their reward. All the children are pretty, some lovely ; the girls grow up pretty, and only become coarse and withered as their active labours in the farm-house and in the sun (in both of which they bear more than an equal share of toil) affect them ; but the boys grow up coarse and clownish ; or rather they do not grow up, but stop in their growth at fifteen or sixteen, and after that appear stunted and down-looking ; though I believe them honest, and as simple-hearted as our demoralising bribery permits. The graces of courtesies are native here ; I am afraid we have rendered them venal. You cannot take a walk in any direction, towards an object of known attraction—the Montanvert, the Flegère, the Chapeau, the source of the Arveron, without meeting a pretty girl, with some pretty offering, very prettily offered ; which, if really intended as a gift, would be very pretty, but which loses all its charm, and half its grace, when the dark-brown eyes are turned up with an asking expression, and the venal courtesies is ready at your service.

On my return to the hotel, Mr. Bosworth, an English gentleman, who, with his sister and a

friend, was staying there, made a welcome proposal to join our party for the morrow. He had made the attempt last year, and had nearly reached the summit, when he was driven back by a sudden storm, which so loosened the upper snow, as to render it impossible to proceed ; and his steadiness of nerve and kindness were of great use, and still greater comfort, to us. Joseph-Marie Coutet, one of the guides who attended Dr. Hamel on his disastrous expedition, and whose father accompanied Saussure on his first ascent, had been chosen by him as one of his guides ; and to his general superintendence we agreed to commit the conduct of our joint adventure. In the evening, two young gentlemen, guests of the Hôtel de Londres, agreed to start in company with our party—keeping, however, all their own arrangements, and leaving us to ours ; which now—except in the provisional department confided to our host—might be regarded as complete.

I did not sleep so much 'as could be wished, on the eve of unusual exertion ; but for this there was no remedy ; and the dark hours seemed very long. Nor, indeed, was I the only watcher ; all night the kitchen of the hotel was the scene of activity only paralleled on similar occasions ; half a hecatomb of chickens, at the least, who had been sacrificed to

the Genius of the Mountain, took their turns on the unresting spit ; hams and legs of mutton simmered in huge pots ; and other viands were preparing for our entertainment in the upward regions, and the preliminary breakfast of the guides ; all was bustle, as if a rent audit or a borough election had been in prospect. It is the policy, perhaps the sentiment, of universal Chamouni, to invest the ascent of Mont Blanc with all sorts of adventitious importance ; it is an event in the valley's history ;—the guides look abstracted ; porters step with a solemn air ; and even the stable-boys, who harness the mules, assume a dignity. At last, however, the morning dawned ; the stainless object of our ambition, which had frightfully glistened on me in my broken slumber, reposed in cold purity, amidst the grey cloudless sky. All the guides engaged in the expedition attended early mass in the church, which was crowded, at six o'clock ; and I felt a relief in witnessing, and to some extent joining in, the service. Having taken some tea, and trifled over an egg, I put on my ponderous shoes, which were necessary in passing the glacier ; in other respects, our dress was of its ordinary slightness—all our weightier apparel being committed to the porters' care. Our ladies, with kind consideration, declined to witness

our departure; so before the time came, they departed to see my brother, whom we had unexpectedly met the preceding evening here, travelling to Rome, on his way towards Martigny, in the opposite direction, after a leave-taking into which I threw a slight swagger, having quietly confided to my niece my purse, and the key of the small desk in which our money and passport were deposited—of course, only because I could have no use for such things on the summit. When they had left us, I went to look at the solemn breakfast of the assembled guides and porters of our united parties, which was really a striking scene; and is evermore the prologue to the great attempt—of course at the expense of the “voyageurs.” In the broad covered balcony, which occupies one side of the hotel at its first floor, the table was spread, and covered with no bread-and-butter mockeries—huge joints of mutton and ham, flanked by enormous wedges of brown bread, were in the course of active consumption; and tumblers, more or less filled with the deep red wine of the country, were in constant use. The table was quite full of guides and porters, all fully equipped like foragers for a long march; two or three, who could not find places, were standing at the extremities of the table, and

filled up the space with their eager figures. Still there was a purpose in the wild group, which, though differently expressed, pervaded all. The veterans looked grave, and ate in silence; two bright-eyed lads, who had yet their laurels to win, tossed off their wine with a gay reckless air; and the porters ate, as if eating was the only care or duty in the world. They looked altogether not unlike festive banditti in a melodrama. They all rose when I was discerned, and drank my health and success; and Julien Devouessou, who was my own peculiar guide, or body-guardian, begged me to take a glass with them in return. I did so, with a careless air enough; but touched parched lips with the brimming glass, and hurried off to be for a moment alone. I felt a resemblance in my position—sharing the glory and the terror of imaginary heroism—to Conachar, in “The Fair Maid of Perth,” clothed in all the attributes of chieftainship, fêted, and dressed, and armed, as if for combat, but having the fearful consciousness within of a spirit unequal to its office—one of the boldest and most affecting creations of novelist or poet. With me, however, as with him, it was “too late;” retreat was, or seemed, impossible; so I kept up the show of bravery with a sort of desperate hope

that something would turn up to help me to the summit; though what that something was I did not inquire.

And now Julien knocked at my chamber door, and told me that all was ready. I descended, and found a very picturesque crowd filling the space before the inn, as the adventurers from the rival hotel, with their attendants, were assembled. My son, as well as they, was already mounted, each with a huge straw hat on head, and a long spiked pole in hand; the guides, twenty in number, had all also poles and soldier-like knapsacks; the porters, six or eight in number, bent beneath the weight of their loads; idlers of all ages, stable-boys, grooms, men, women, and children, filled up the scene; and the windows of the hotel were lined with guests, who had just learned the cause of the bustle. It was exactly eight o'clock when I took my lance in hand, and set forward on my mule, accompanied by all the adventurers, except Mr. Bosworth, who walked with his sister and friend, beside his mule, till the crowd had left us. I feared they would hang on the skirts of our journey, but was happy to find, when we had crossed the bridge over the Arve, that the road was occupied only by our procession. We proceeded leisurely along the road to the hamlet

of Pelerins, where Mr. Bosworth took his farewell of his sister, and mounted his mule; and our ranks were complete. The cottagers, at every farm we passed, came out and waved their good wishes, with evident interest in the attempt, which is *the* event of their simple annals; and the pretty girls dropped their prettiest curtsies, without wishing to be paid for them. From the hamlet we turned upwards through the pine-wood, thence emerged on the blazing hill-side, and bent our way upwards, with no other deviations but those which the steepness of the declivity rendered needful, until scanty trees gave place to scantier shrubs—shrubs to furze bushes—these grew rare among wastes of stones, until nothing remained but scanty grass and mosses to tell of the luxuriant world below us. My mule was not so docile as the Chamouni mules usually are, or I was too much wrapt in my own thoughts to give him attention; for while there was a tree or a shrub against which he could bear me, he did so, and at last became so entangled in the boughs of a tree which hung over an awful declivity, that I was, or thought myself, obliged to throw myself off, lest he should plunge with me down the steep, and only saved myself from falling to a considerable depth among the rocks, by catching a furze-

bush on the edge. This was, I believe, my greatest real peril of the attempt; and yet this should not be attributed to it as a peculiar danger, for the same accident might have occurred with a similar animal, in the ordinary route to the Montanvert or the Flegère. I declined mounting again, and was glad when the difficulties of the ground induced all my companions to abandon their mules to the care of the small people who tended them, which happened before we reached the region of total sterility, and we then addressed ourselves in earnest to our *work*; for such even Mr. Carlyle would allow to be its proper designation.

Half an hour's scrambling among rocks and loose stones brought us to the edge of a deep defile through which a stream, gushing from the glacier unseen beyond, foamed at a fearful depth below us. As we painfully ascended, we rose above the source of this stream, which we saw gushing down the opposite bank, and entered the interior of the ravine. The depth was, at first, cheered by a small pure rivulet, which cherished scanty grass, and a shrub or two, and a clump of flowers,—unlooked for reliefs in this stony solitude, and to which I had bidden adieu;—but we rose above the bubbling fountain of this rill; and

then the fringe of grass ceased, but the purple monkshood still waved bravely above the large stones, and a small yellow flower now and then peeped out from beneath their shelter. These, at length, finally disappeared; and the huge gully stretched before us, stony and steep, shutting out all prospect and blazing with heat. This was the most physically toilsome walking I had ever yet encountered; and but for the cheering looks and actions of the guides, I should here have given up the attempt in despair. My younger companions, however, were quite fresh and vigorous; and hurried on with needless, and I thought indiscreet haste to the entrance of the glacier, while I toiled on at a slower pace with two of my guides. I was encouraged to persevere by the assurance that the passage of the glacier would be much less laborious than the half scrambling, half climbing up the gully in which I was engaged; and so I found it. After one heavy struggle over a mound of rubbish, and then over some huge blocks of dirty ice, I attained the pure floor of the glacier, and experienced a delightful and invigorating change from the stony wilderness up which I had laboured. I found the passage of the glacier so strangely unlike the representations given in the published accounts of previous ascents, that I cannot doubt

but that a great, though perhaps transitory, alteration had occurred in its surface. In every account I have read, it has been represented, with more or less minuteness of detail, as fearfully rugged; not only intersected with frequent crevices, but blocked up with walls and turrets of ice, and only to be surmounted by frequent climbing; not unlike, indeed, its actual condition at that lower point of swelling descent which I had previously visited, and which it seemed to me impossible to traverse.*

* The companion of Dr Hamel, whose deeply interesting account of his ascent will be found in the New Monthly Magazine, vol. i. 156, thus describes the aspect of the glacier, and the passage through its wonders.

"The Mer de Glace, which has been compared to a sea suddenly congealed in the midst of a storm, cannot, our guides assured us, enter into competition with it. The fissures were so great, so wide, and so deep—the different views varying every instant presents, are so awful, so fantastic, that no idea of them can be presented to the mind by the most eloquent pen. At one time the traveller finds himself denied apparently all further progress by an immense, precipitous tower of ice; this is surmounted by a staircase of notches, which one of the guides cuts in the ice with a hatchet which he carries for the purpose. Then he must descend into an awful chasm, from which he emerges in like manner. Again he meets with fissures, called by the guides *crevasses*, of uncertain depths, which are crossed by laying the ladder over them and passing on all-fours."

Captain Markham Sherwill, who, with Dr. Clarke, ascended Mont Blanc, with success, on 25th, 26th, and 27th August, 1825, and whose narrative was to me at least of great interest, thus describes his passage over the glacier:—

"On proceeding over the terrific Glacier des Bossons, strict

Whatever it may have been, or may become hereafter, its surface presented to me nothing

injunctions were given to us by the guides not to deviate from the track of the two leading men, who, continued to sound the snow with their poles, before they set their feet down. The utmost caution and prudence are necessary in this respect, for in a thousand places over which we passed, we found nothing to walk on but an overhanging drift or shelf of snow, which partially hid from our view caverns and crevices of from one hundred to two hundred feet deep. In case the first guide should suddenly fall into one of the depths, the object of the rope by which he is affixed to the second is apparent ; for he, being in advance eight or ten paces, is immediately held up by the other, until sufficient aid can be afforded by the whole party to save him from destruction. We, therefore, continued in a single line, following the footsteps of our foremost man. These drifts of overhanging snow are denominated bridges by the guides, but in many cases they do not allow more than one person to cross them at a time, as the additional weight of a second might destroy the ridge, and thus cut off the communication of the party at least for a considerable time. Your pole is your only support, a slow and steady step essential, and your eye must carefully guide your foot, never varying your step from the track the leading guides have made.

" We continued to cross the majestic though frightful glacier during four hours. Occasionally we were detained a quarter of an hour, and oftentimes more, standing in the snow nearly up to our knees, while the foremost guides were actively employed in cutting steps with the hatchet in the almost perpendicular walls of ice. These walls are in fact the sides of the crevices in the glaciers, such as you must remember to have seen in the Mer de Glace ; but the Mer de Glace, compared to the rugged chasms and crevices of the Glacier des Bossons, is scarcely rougher than a plain gravel walk or a frozen pond. Our difficulties increased as we continued to advance on this fearful glacier. The crevices became considerably wider than we had hitherto found them, and irregularities on the surface of the ice very troublesome and perplexing. These crevices presented themselves at every twenty or thirty paces, and often the narrow walls of ice which divided

more formidable than a huge waste of the purest frozen snow, spread amidst enormous rocks, tending upwards at a steep but not dangerous elevation, and riven in parts by irregular crevices, which alone remained to justify the terrific descriptions of former aspirants; and even these were rarely broad enough to be terrible. Its first aspect was that of an immense white sheet, which might have been let down from heaven, puckered up and fastened at irregular heights to the rocks which bounded each side of the prospect, and floating down gracefully from its fastenings. Towards the edges, indeed, when it came in contact with the rocks in which it is thus imbedded, there appeared, on a near approach, vast walls and columns and tables of ice, which sometimes looked as if they grew out of the rock; these were pierced by caverns of the purest white, sometimes draped with icicles, and embossed with fantastic shapes; little chapels of exquisite tracery in which altars

them were so slippery that it required the utmost care and caution to walk along their edge. The depth of these we could not at all times measure, except in cases where we descended into them, in order to avoid a long circuitous route, which might have terminated in similar difficulties; in such a case, after descending we mounted the opposite wall. The deeper we found the crevices, the darker was the shade of green which we observed in the ice; and particularly, in looking into the arched caverns, we noticed that the colour was still darker."

were not wanting; recesses as beautiful in their dazzling fragility, as the Cave of Fingal at Staffa in the sculptured beauty of its roof, and the sable majesty of its unperishing columns. But the field of the glacier, except where split by crevices, presented no obstacle to ordinary up-hill walking, beyond the annoyance of being sometimes shoe-deep in the loosened snow, and the slipperiness betrayed by a brighter glistening, which the nailed shoes and spiked pole would have enabled me to encounter, even if the arm of the guide had not been always ready to anticipate the least need of assistance.

I had scarcely entered on the glacier, when I was delighted to observe all my brisker comrades at a dead stop; they had far outstripped me and my guides in the ascent of the stony region; and I was glad of any temporary obstacle which enabled me to rejoin them. I found them on the brink of the first and most formidable—indeed the only really formidable—crevice of the glacier, a jagged slit of about seven or eight yards in width at the opening, narrowing as it slanted downwards, and deepening in colour from the loveliest pale green into darkness; while from a hundred fathoms below, the sound of rushing water was heard, as if a subterraneous river was forcing a way through the foundations of the glacier. Across this gulf

stretched a narrow wall of ice, connecting our side with that beyond ; and over this we were to pass it, unless we would make an experimental circuit, of unknown extent, to find a termination of the crevice ; and when I arrived, I found everything prepared for the passage. Some of the guides already stood on the opposite brink, one of whom held a rope, while another guide held it on our side, and so formed a rail ; holding by which, we one by one crossed in safety. The narrowness of this ledge may be guessed by the exploit which one young gentleman performed ; who, instead of walking, placed himself astride upon it, and directing the rope to be lowered to suit his equestrian position, drew himself along, amidst the cheers and laughter of the spectators. I was astonished then, I am puzzled now, at the real composure with which I performed my own part ; for, though generally affected with distressing dizziness on any height although assured of perfect safety, I felt here no apprehension ; no sinking of the heart ; not a qualm. I can account for this only by the extreme beauty of the colours of the chasm itself ; its purity and celestial loveliness ; which absorbed the sense of danger ; so that “its beauty” did not “make me effeminate,” but for the moment brave. I met with no similar opportunity either of testing

or signalling my courage; for the other crevices in my path were only such as could be stepped or lightly leaped over, aided by the ready arm of the guide, which felt like a wall of rock. Being now on this "fair field," my younger and more active friends left me again behind, and I found myself alone in the midst of this wide snow desert; for though I was attended by two guides—Julien, who was properly mine, and Coutet, who owed his allegiance to Mr. Bosworth, but who probably remained with me in commiseration of my greater need—I did not understand their French nor they my English; so that no word broke the silence which, undisturbed even by an insect's wing, was only made more fearful by the half-stifled sound of subterraneous waters which sometimes murmured on the ear. All the encouragement, however, that kind looks, courteous actions, and seasonable help could render, was amply bestowed. I needed all their influences; for though the icy track was to me far more tolerable than the contest with the earth and stones, after the first relief of contrast had been enjoyed, my strength grew less; and the heat parched me with thirst, which the guides, by very expressive pantomime, forbade me to relieve by swallowing the crisp snow which offered itself to me at every weary

step. A delightful relief came, however, before I had looked for any. As we were ascending near the verge of the glacier, in sight of some of those border chapels and oratories which arose fantastic in the ice, Coutet leaped into a small cavern, which opened at one side, a little below the level of our track; produced a tumbler from his knapsack, filled it from a little alabaster basin, which, hollowed in a slab of ice, received a trickling thread of water bursting from the cavern side, and presented it to me with a light merry laugh, which said, as plain as words, "There! did you ever taste any drink like this?" Assuredly, I never did—clear as crystal—cold as ice, to my feverish lips and throat it seemed nectar; and I was rejoiced indeed when my conductor filled a second glass and offered it to me, as a reward for my abstinence from the unlawful snow. Some of the happiest draughts I ever quaffed ran over my memory, in sparkling distinctness; but I recollected none equal to this. As we resumed our walk, with strength which, for a minute, seemed equal to any labour, I seemed to renew some of those—the Champagne I have found ready iced, awaiting me and some delightful companions, after walks of twelve or fifteen miles by the banks of the Wye in glorious summer days—of the whiskey which had

heightened the exhilaration of that moment when, having achieved the pinnacle of Snowdon, I drew in my first draught of mountain gladness — of old port drunk in old times with old friends, when life was young, and port wine shed flavours on the memory which it may never again afford to the taste — of porter drunk from the proper material, after the glorious heat and pressure of the pit of Covent Garden Theatre, on one of Mr. Kemble's farewell nights, or some bright reappearance of Mrs. Siddons, when the fall of the curtain on the completed tragedy left the spectator able to feel all the thirst which the pressure at the door and its succeeding heats had accumulated, but which a nobler thirst had suspended till then; but these draughts surpassed all. For the first time (possibly the last) I thought of Father Mathew not only with respect, but with sympathy; and, if a third glass had been permitted, would have drunk it to his health. But, alas! there may be "too much of water," as well as of stouter drinks; and Coutet, after the second, had replaced his cup in his knapsack with an air which told me I must have no more; but I went on in brief vigour. Too brief; for though the recollection of the draughts remained, and even grew more vivid, as

I went on, the strength they seemed to give soon vanished; and I toiled up the snow as slowly and painfully as before I had drained them. I usually now leaned on the arm of Julien on one side, and on my pole on the other; sometimes, when the way was very steep, each guide held his pole beside me, and I walked on leaning on each. Thus I proceeded till I thought I could proceed no further; when a shout of welcome rang through the snowy field, and resounded in echoes from the lofty tops; and our rocks of refuge, the Grands Mulets, all manned by our friends, rose black and cheerful before us. The ascent from the snow to the resting-place, which is described as so difficult and perilous by former adventurers,* was not difficult now, except

* Dr. Hamel's companion thus describes the ascent of the Grands Mulets:—"After proceeding in this way for about an hour we arrived by a steep slope at the base of the Grands Mulets, a name given to a ridge of rocks, or rather a single rock, which rises almost perpendicularly to a great height out of the eternal snow which surrounds it on all sides, and which is, from the nature of its construction, generally bare of snow itself. In ascending this ridge we had a new species of danger to contend with. Our steps were all upon loose fragments of the rock, which was schistous. These occasionally gave way beneath our tread, and fell with tremendous noise into the depths below. Owing, however, to the caution of our excellent guides, who perpetually warned us against suspicious stones, we surmounted this perilous ascent without any accident. Once or twice, indeed, a few stones from above alarmed us by whizzing past us, but some one of the

to my extreme fatigue. I can only account for this facility, and that of the passage over the glacier, by supposing that the snow of early spring had buried beneath it many of those brilliant inequalities which had rendered it so difficult; and, by raising the level of the glacier, had diminished the ascent of the rocks. Instead of an hour, which it cost Dr. Hamel's party to surmount it, ten minutes' scrambling was sufficient for me, tired as I was; and of perils I saw and felt none. After a little crawling among loose stones, then a little winding among the rough galleries of the rock, I found my hand grasped by that of my son, and sank down utterly exhausted on the ledge which was to serve for our dining-room and our couch. He speedily administered to me a beaker of excellent claret which had been

guides, being constantly on the look out, advertised us in time of the danger, which we evaded by crouching down in some of the hollows. On the whole, we found the ascent of the rock less formidable than we had anticipated from its first appearance; for, though we occasionally had to climb round projecting points where we seemed to be suspended in mid-air, yet for the most part a false step would have only carried us down to some shelf a few feet lower, which would have received us. I must except, however, the last twenty or thirty yards, which lay over a ridge exactly like Striden-edge on Helvellyn, in the north of England, from which we had a view of a precipice on each side of the most awful depth, and with very precarious footing, for here the guides could not make the usual notches from the hardness of the rock."

supplied by our host for our peculiar use—only inferior to the water of the ice-cave—and which so revived me that, in a few minutes, I was able to contemplate and enjoy the matchless glories of our position.

The Grands Mulets are (or at least *were* when I sojourned upon them) a narrow chain of dark granite rocks, which break out from the mantle of snow that clothes the exterior of the mountain, terminating in an abrupt declivity, directly opposite to the valley of Chamouni; which have, on their western side, ledges sufficiently level and protected at the back to serve for a traveller's rest. Their name is said to have originated from a fancied resemblance of their aspect as surveyed from the valley to a team of mules; to me they appeared from the same point of vision, rather to resemble a set of projecting attic-windows, fixed in a steep shelving roof; but here, bristling with unequal splinters, they seemed to resemble a line of immense fir-apples, with the cones occasionally broken; but no words can give any adequate idea of the awful contrast of their dark isolated range of pinnacles with the dazzling fields of ice and snow above, around, and beneath them. The most capacious ledge is on the north-western side of the first rock of the range; of irregular width,

being perhaps seven feet at the broadest, backed by the summit of the rock rising about twenty feet above it, and protected at its edge partly by natural projections of the rock itself, and partly by inserted stones which the guides place and renew on their expeditions. When I approached these rocks of refuge, the chief ledge was occupied by my son and three or four of our fellow aspirants; while the guides and porters were dispersed in smaller ledges or fissures of the range, so that the crags were all animated with mortal life; "a fortress built by nature for herself," not "against infection or the hand of war," but far beyond the reach of either, had been stormed and manned through all its rough battlements; while the piled poles gave hints of an armoury of lances, and the waving handkerchiefs of various colours which floated in the thin air, streamed like its festal flags. Almost in front rose the huge Dôme du Gouté—here surveyed in its full grandeur—a vast cupola of stainless snow; to its right, the Aiguille du Gouté, a bulk of rock rising out of a belt of snow; to the left, the highest summit, scarcely here looking larger than from the valley, but cast further back in a more solemn seclusion from its subject domes and spires; all beneath these, the greatest summits, was well-sunned but unspotted

snow ; broken only by a few reddish rocks on the right of the top ; ascending on every side from the basin out of which our rock arose, and thence floating downwards till lost to the sight in the steepness of the descent, except that here and there at the rim of the downward view, a rock projected out, as if overhanging the unseen abyss, in shape like the tusk of some gigantic animal. The lower snow was, however, illustrated by the track of the party—deep-imprinted steps of some twenty of “us fools of nature,” which gave a human interest to the waste. Beyond, far below, almost as at the bottom of a well, the broadest part of the valley of Chamouni gleamed with its bits of yellow fields and white-babyhouses, above which the top of the Bréven stood out in blackness ; and, beyond that, the far mightier rock of the Aiguille Varens crouched like a lion in the deep blue sky. To the left, the huge round top of the Buet walled in the prospect ; which was, although thus so mighty in objects, yet limited in extent ; admitting no distance except a gleam of blue of the Lake of Geneva, with a faint outline of hills—the line of the Jura beyond it—which also I thought might be traced to the left of the Bréven at the extreme verge of the horizon. Having recovered sufficient strength to crawl round the buttress which towered

above our resting-place, I looked down into the other great snow valley which it overlooked and divided from that which we had made ours; it was not so vast, but still more fearful: bordered by heights more abrupt, between the Aiguille du Midi and the summit, precipices which the chamois can never scale. Our rock on this side was far more precipitous than on that by which we had ascended; and, therefore, I contented myself with one glance, and crept back to my place in the safer eyry.

Our rock was now all over bustle with active and merry preparations for dinner. The guides, on all sides, were exhibiting the contents of their knapsacks; the porters brought out the more serious productions of their baskets; many a rough stone became the table on which a poor skinny fowl or a black leg of mutton lay ready for demolition; the sound of corks jerked musically on the air; and cups, glasses, and red wine, flowing around from bottle to glass, humanized the scene. Among the loose stones at the foot of the rock, the guides had lighted a fire, from wood picked up by the way, and over it a saucepan was simmering right merrily with incipient lemonade, which they manufactured by first paving the ample saucepan with slices of lemons, then adding a layer of sugar,

filling it up to the brim with snow, and boiling the whole together till it made the most innocent if not the pleasantest beverage which we enjoyed. The *vin ordinaire* mingled with water, perhaps relieved or rather gratified the thirst still better; but we had excellent claret and sauterne, which were too dangerous drinks for us to take freely, but which we sipped in small quantities, and were still more pleased to offer to the guides, who always feel and appreciate a participation of that kind with their peculiar patient; and I am sure richly deserve it. The manner of dining belonged more to the romantic than the classical; there was no unity of place, though there was unity of purpose; each was supplied by his guide according to his wish with chicken and ham or mutton;—sometimes with a knife to himself, sometimes shared with his fellow; friendly regards were cemented by eating salt not merely at the same table but from the same paper; and when the guides found leisure to take their own well-earned meal, (not that some small blessings had been wholly wanting to them before) each was perched on his own crag, so that as you looked down the rough descent you might have fancied it a vast honeycomb alive with festive bees. Indeed the dinner never entirely ceased till it merged in

supper ; for there was a wild irregularity about our appetites congenial with the scene ; and as for drinking—you had but to breathe a wish, and a stalwart cupbearer was at your side with a draft of lemonade or wine-and-water such as Ganymede never handed to Jupiter in that lower region which was the scene of his Olympian revels. I regret to confess that I could not eat much myself ; but I looked with a pleasure akin to that with which the French King watched the breakfast of Quentin Durward, on the activity of my younger friends, as they tore asunder the devoted chickens ; poor fleshless things ! unworthy of so elevated a destiny ; but whose bones, prematurely exalted into fossils, will supply important matter of speculation to aspiring geologists, and be produced to wondering Scientific Associations in future ages.

When the first rage of hunger was appeased—but before the tables were eaten or removed (which will not be for some time)—the guides suggested the expediency of arranging our dresses at once for the night and for the ascent, by putting on the warm clothing suitable to both, and which being once done, would enable us to start as soon as we should be awakened for the upward march. A smooth ledge in the next rock served us in turn for a dressing-room, in which my huge stockings

were, by some magic, drawn on ; and the massive shoes which had been dried in the sun, resumed ; and gaiters buttoned over the trousers in strange fashion—in all which very arduous accomplishments I was assisted by Julien, with a delicate dexterity which would have done honour to a French valet, and a mingled kindness, respect and command, like those blended in the manner of an old family servant to a petted young master. I should have thought the shoes, well saturated with snow, once removed, could never have been put on over the tremendous stockings ; but even this last miracle of the toilet was happily accomplished ; and I was pronounced ready to lie down for the night and to start on the morrow, or rather at the midnight summons. So, after a cup of weak brandy and water which Julien recommended and shared, I took my pole and picked my way over the prostrate bodies of two young gentlemen who were already asleep, and squeezed myself into my allotted niche, with my head supported by a large comfortable stone, and my feet pressed against the low fence edging the shelf—figuring myself to myself as like an effigy on a monument. The position was in no respect, however, unpleasant, except in the confinement of the limbs and a very slight feeling of cold ; and I was surprised to find

how very tolerable a couch it proved. The notion of the ledge being a terrible place—overhanging or bordering a frightful precipice, is entirely erroneous; its height above the snow on the side it fronts is not formidable; and the bristling irregularity of the rock prevents the slightest sense of dizziness or danger. It is far beyond all reach of avalanches—which are heard in the stillness of the night thundering down the surrounding but distant precipices with no more possibility of reaching the listener, than when he looks on the Jungfrau from the platform of the Wengern Alp. It has been customary, according to the published narratives of the ascent, to erect a tent here, under which the travellers sleep; and Mr. Bosworth, early in the afternoon, put up an awning against the rock and supported it by poles, under which he proposed to sleep and to include us;—which seemed to justify me in applying to our position the words of the fated Richard—

“ Here pitch our tent ; even here in Bosworth field—
Up with my tent ; here will I lie to-night ;
But where to-morrow ?—Well, all ’s one for that ;
Up with the tent ! ”

But the experiment did not answer; the tent was laid aside, having served no purpose but associating a passage of Shakspeare with our lot;

enough in itself to humanise the desolate snows; and its owner, with that quiet kindness which marked his demeanour, finding that one of the younger gentlemen needed the accommodation of the best ledge more than himself, silently resigned it, without the theatrical expression of Sir Philip Sidney, and bivouacked on the second rock. We lay, therefore, with no meaner covering than the heavens, on the ledge—my son occupying the outer place, “at his particular desire, and, for that night only”—and I resting beside him. He did not, however, come to bed till long after I had taken up my station; but was scrambling about the rocks and breaking chicken bones with the guides, who kept up the festivity of the evening till after sunset.

Soon after I had thus “set up my rest,” the grand process of sun-setting began; and solemn as have been many sunsets to me, I never saw one—I will not say merely equal to this—but one resembling it; for the difference was not in degree, but in kind. Above and around there was not a cloud—not a speck to dim the deepening azure of the sky, nor a fleecy breath of mist wafted or lingering about the towers or domes of the mountain. These glowed for a few minutes in deeper rose-colour than that which appeared to clothe

them at this hour from below ; the summit, as usual, retained it last ; and when it faded, it left them in the cold whiteness of the dawn. Thus far—with the grandeur above us—all passed in its usual procession of glory ; but while I watched those receding tints, flocks of clouds arose below ; and filled up the valley of Chamouni to the brim with tissues waving greyly, like floating shrouds. They were then seen creeping up within the folds of the valley beyond, till that also assumed, as far as it was revealed, the same spectral veil—while the top of the Bréven, the Aiguille Varens, and the head of the Buet, stood out like islands in that solemn sea. But beyond—in the expanse to the right of the Bréven top, what glory was disclosed!—a heaven-tinged cloud-land, not to be gazed at from below by a subject-mortal, but to be looked down into as from a purer seat—a subjected enchantment spread beneath us—as if from some pinnacle of heaven, the eye were permitted to gaze upon its lower glories, the habitations and the array of angels. The first appearance of this vision was that of a celestial city, all of sapphire, circling a lake of azure, while far away in measureless distance, legions of angelic hosts—shapeless as those of Rembrandt, descending on Jacob's slumber, but

giving like them the sense of winged glories, were ranged, while tents and pavilions of violet and gold behind them, seemed to bespeak a martial array. Presently these splendours became all confused ; and then a sterner grandeur reigned ; a scene of huge purple caverns and golden rocks, but beside a sapphire sea studded with islands of deeper gold ; and then the colours blended, and faded, and nothing but one heap of purple clouds filled the place of the gorgeous vision ; and I was alone with the rock, the snow, and the stars.

When this pageantry of a lower heaven had quite passed away I fell asleep, and slept without a dream. I only awoke once, and finding my next companion awake, inquired if he knew the hour, hoping that the period for starting had arrived. He informed me, being able to interpret the language of his watch, that it was only ten o'clock ; but, after a minute or two's shiver I fell asleep again, and slept till the guides roused me at ten minutes before twelve from deep and sweet slumber. There was no moonlight—the only elemental felicity wanting to our enterprise—but the stars and the snow relieved the darkness, which was also broken by numerous lanterns, which were already lighted, and shone among the bristling cornices of the rock below

me like huge dull glow-worms. After the first sensation of cold and stiffness had subsided, and the mistiness that hangs over the perception of a suddenly-awakened sleeper in a strange place had dispersed, I took my pole and picked my way down the rock, my steps being lighted by Julien's lantern, and soon found myself in the midst of the long procession of travellers and guides slowly pacing the plain of snow which lies between the rock and the first upward slope. When we began to ascend, the snow was found so hard and so steep, that we were obliged to pause every ten paces while the guides with hatchets cut steps. Every one, I believe, performs some part well; at least few are without some grace or power, which they are found to possess in a peculiar degree if the proper occasion occurs to rouse it into action; and I performed the stopping part admirably. While we stood still I felt as if able to go on; and it is possible that if the progress had always been as difficult, and consequently as slow and as replete with stoppages, I might eventually have reached the summit—unless first frozen. But unluckily for me these occasions of halting soon ceased; for the snow become so loose, that by only sinking to the knees in it at each step you could advance without an obstacle.

The line of march lay up long slopes of snow; nothing could ever be discerned but a waste of snow ascending in a steep inclination before us; no crevice gave us pause; there was nothing to vary the toil or the pain, except that as fatigue crept on, and nature began to discriminate between the stronger and the weaker, our line was no longer continuous but broken into parties, which, of course, rendered the position of the hindermost more dispiriting. The rarity of the atmosphere now began to affect us; and as the disorder resulting from this cause was more impartial than the distribution of muscular activity, our condition was, for a short time, almost equalised; even Mr. Bosworth felt violent nausea and headache; while I only felt, in addition to the distress of increasing weakness, the taste or scent of blood in the mouth, as it were about to burst from the nostrils. We thus reached the Grand Plateau—a long field of snow in the bosom of the highest pinnacles of the mountain—which, being nearly level, was much less distressing to traverse than the previous slopes; but just before the commencement of the next ascent, which rose in a vast dim curve, the immediate occasion of my failure occurred. Mr. Bosworth, who was in advance, turned back to

inform me that my son was so much affected by the elevation, that his guides thought it necessary that he should return. We halted till we were joined by him and his guides ; on two of whom he was leaning, and who explained that he was sick and faint, and wished to lie down for a few minutes, to which they would not consent, as, if he should fall asleep on the snow, he might never awake. The youth himself was anxious to proceed—quite satisfied if he might only rest for a very little time he could go on—but they shook their heads, and as their interests and wishes were strongly for our success, I felt it was impossible to trifle with such a decision. I could not allow him to return without me ; and, therefore, determined at once to abandon the further prosecution of the adventure ; a determination which I should not else have formed *at that moment*, but which I believe I must have adopted soon from mere prostration of strength ; and which, therefore, I do not lay, in the least, to the charge of his indisposition. He was still light of limb and courageous in heart ; only afflicted by the treachery of the stomach, and dizziness produced by the rarity of the air ; whereas, if I had been supported and dragged (as perhaps I might have been) to the foot of the steep at La Côte,

which is the last difficulty of the ascent, I do not believe I should have had muscular pliancy left to raise a foot up a step of the long staircase, which the guides are obliged to cut in its frozen snow. While the guides were re-arranging matters for the descent, I took one longing lingering glance at the upward scenery, and perceived sublime indications of those heights I was never to climb. The other parties were ascending the enormous curve beyond our platform; their line exhibited only by the lanterns, which seemed self-moving along the snow amidst darkness, but marking luminously a portion of the glorious dome—regular, it seemed, as that of St. Paul's Cathedral—and more beautiful, because springing at once into a globular form, and of a size compared to which all cupolas fashioned by hands are as those of a baby-house—recalling to my mind the sphere throne of the Spirit in the Hall of Eblis.

Silent and sad our discomfited bands addressed themselves to the inglorious work of descending; and each of us being supported by a rope which was held by a guide, moved downwards (alas!) with accelerated steps. Morning soon broke cold and grey over us, and became broad day when we regained our former lodging on the Grand Mulets. Here we found clothing and provisions which we

had left, without any apprehension of theft ; and, with the aid of the guides, who wrapped the coverings about us with great adroitness, renewed our couch, and tried in vain to sleep. We had scarcely endeavoured to compose ourselves before we saw another detachment—that of one of the young gentlemen who had joined us from the Hôtel de Londres—following our downward track, and soon welcomed him as a companion in misfortune. And presently a black lonely speck was discovered, slowly moving on the snow, downward yet far out of our track ; who or what it could be was matter of puzzling guesses, almost of fear ; but it turned out to be an enthusiastic old man, who, many years ago, had been one of the Chamouni guides, but had been living since some other life at Geneva, and being disturbed by reports of the favourable condition of his once-loved mountain, and of the ascents which had succeeded, travelled to the Prieuré to join or follow some party, and had modestly followed ours alone at a distance, in the hope of once more realising the summit of his young ambition and success. He found that he had overtasked his strength ; and soon reached us, piteously exhausted, to obtain some relief in the consolations of his old comrades, and in a participation in such fragmental provisions as were left from the evening's banquet.

Although jaded, and without "that alacrity and cheer of spirit," which mounting had induced, I felt no inclination to sleep; and watched the sun's advance over the sea of clouds which filled the valleys; but the effects were so inferior to those which attended the setting, that I can scarcely recal them to memory.

We remained on the rock till seven o'clock, about the time when Mr. Bosworth and our other fortunate associate stood on the summit, having waited until the snow should be sufficiently softened to enable us to pass the glacier in safety. The guides having guessed that the slender bridge, by which we had crossed the principal crevice, existed no longer—in which conjecture the experience of those who followed confirmed them—conducted us by a more circuitous route, which was not so absolutely secure from avalanches as that by which we ascended, but which presented no chasm too broad to be leaped over with very slight exertion. The descent of the stony defile was a long and painful labour, now unlightened by hope; and though the day was as glorious as its predecessors, I was now too eager to relieve the anxieties of our friends at Chamouni to observe the descending prospect. We found mules at a chalet below, near the place where the party had dismounted in

ascending, and rode to our hotel. Although I was not disappointed in the result—for, on the contrary, its very failure had a success beyond all my reasonable anticipations, I shrunk from the gaze of the peasants, who stared at me as I passed—dropping curtsies and waving hands and handkerchiefs no longer—and thought, as I dismounted unobserved at the hotel (such vanities does the attempt nurture), of the feelings with which Napoleon must have shrunk into Paris from Waterloo. Our ladies, however, were perfectly satisfied with our inglorious safety, having suppressed much more fear than they had chosen to express, that they might not disappoint or distress us; and a warm bath, a change of dress, and some good tea, restored me to the height of agreeable languor and a pleasing sense of unsuccessful merit; so that when the petards fired off from the garden before our windows, announced the triumphant return of Mr. Bosworth, after the attainment of first class honours, I was able, without (I believe) the least alloy of envy, to meet and congratulate him on success, merited no less by personal prowess than by regard to the comforts and feelings of others. A slight irritation of the skin was the only inconvenience which followed the attempt either of my son or myself; and that did not prevent us

from dining at the *table d'hôte* at five o'clock, and lounging idly by the river side in the evening.

Two questions will be asked by those who think the attempt worthy their consideration—was it justifiable?—and was it required? I venture to answer both in the affirmative;—with the hope that I am right as to the first, and the certainty that I am right as to the last.

It is the fashion with those who have never felt the passion for ascending Mont Blanc to deal out heavy censures against those who have made the venture, as wantonly risking their own lives and tempting the guides to risk theirs, without any adequate purpose. Mr. Murray's Guide Book—which, without offence, I may consider as the virtual representative of all the respectable common-place on this subject—in one of those few passages which guide to nothing, and which, with the quotations from Lord Byron, may be regarded as taxes on the first necessary of travelling life—thus sums up the case against us. “When Saussure ascended to make experiments at that height, the motive was a worthy one, but those who are impelled by curiosity alone are not justified in risking the lives of the guides. The pay tempts those brave fellows to encounter the danger, but their

safety, devoted as they are to their employers, is risked for a poor consideration. It is no excuse that the employer thinks his own life worthless; here he ought to think of the safety of others; and yet scarcely a season passes without the attempt." I cannot agree in the facts suggested in this passage, or in the inferences drawn from them. There is danger, to be sure—that is, the possibility of serious accident—as "'tis dangerous to ride, to walk, to take a cold," as there is more danger in sliding on the ice than on dry ground; or as it is dangerous to go into the water before you have learned to swim; but I do not believe there was more danger in our attempt than in penetrating the glaciers to the Jardin; the difficulty was the fatigue, not the danger. Doctor Hamel and his friends who persisted in ascending after a storm had shaken the snows and detained them for a whole day at the Grand Mulets, might not be able to acquit themselves of blame when the fatal result occurred after all appearance of danger had passed; but I was assured by the *chef* and by all the guides, that there was no more danger than always attends walking on the ice among crevices, and to the guides, who are accustomed to such exercise, none whatever;—and I saw nothing to prove this judg-

ment erroneous; indeed I never felt any danger except that of being obliged to turn back,—unless, indeed, when I was carried by my mule into the thicket on a path which no moralist, even if he had been director of an insurance company, would have forbidden to a life insured in his office. The rule seems to be sustained by an unjust exception in favour of scientific experiment—as if there were nothing else worthy encountering risk for! Surely the desire to penetrate into the profoundest recesses of the universe and expound their wonders to others—to acquire some knowledge of the greatness of its most marvellous objects beyond that expressed in mere figures of distances, in the hope to associate these with kindred thoughts, born of their majesties—is as worthy an object of risk—if risk there were—as to ascertain the density of the air at a given height. As to the hazard of the guides, which, except in expeditions undertaken against their judgment, is inconceivably small—I may ask whether every occupation must be stripped of all that elevates it and makes it heroic,—and whether any occupation can be truly heroic which has not in it something of danger? When Luckie Mucklebackit replies to our old friend Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck's exposition on the dearness of her fish—"It is not fish

you are buying, 'tis men's lives"—and is terribly justified by the catastrophe which follows—do we wish that fishermen should always keep their boats hauled on shore, except in weather when no storm is possible, lest some brave young fisher-lad should meet poor Steenie's fate? O, no!—life is a thing of hazards, or it is not life; but such stuff as "dreams are made of." Nor is it just to the guides—venal as their professional courtesies and bravery, in one sense, are—to represent them as being tempted only by the pay to encounter the unavoidable labours and possible dangers of the ascent. They love the enterprise;—not merely the sense and praise of success—but the actual intimacy they acquire with the mountain, which has cowered over their infancy; the glory of their native vale; and the daily wonder of their lives. I can bear witness that, at least in our case, there was no reluctance to overcome; for although I kept my purpose as secret as I could, I was pestered by applications from guides, who, having guessed it, wished engagements; and only escaped them by refusing to engage any, and referring them entirely to the *chef*. For myself, I can truly say that, in making the attempt—although it was foolish enough in reference to my chance of accomplishment—I was prompted by no idle

wish for distinction ; nor, if I had succeeded, should I have thought myself entitled to boast of any *feat* of physical prowess. On the contrary,—so great are the appliances supplied by the guides to a person who has not the strongest and justest self-reliance ; so much is done for him—so little by him ; he is so aided at every step ; so supported, dragged, all but carried, that it seems to me a process more effeminate than manly, and by no means so unsuited to the nature of the ladies who have been among its achievers, than at first sight appears. With Mr. Bosworth and Mr. Nicholson, it was a real self-sustained effort ; but, with me, even as far as I went, it implied little more than the capacity of moving and enduring. My motive was an earnest love of nature, heightened, in this instance, almost into passion, by the kindling perusal of many tales of the ascent ; an ardent longing to unravel the mystery of a mountain, which I *believed* to be unrivalled in Europe, but which, to the eye, seemed surpassed in height by many nameless hills ; and this I esteem as worthy a motive as the wish to make experiments with the barometer.

And was the effort, notwithstanding the failure of its loftiest aim, repaid ? Yes ;—richly. Except the panoramic view from the summit, which, even

when unveiled, the successful adventurer has rarely the physical power to appreciate, I believe I obtained all the real fruits of the expedition ; for I saw enough of the waving path above me to understand its majesties ; and beyond my ken, there could be nothing greater. I know now what the mountain is ; how it sits crouched, like Queen Constance, "on the huge firm earth," as if to hide its immensity from the superficial gazer. The object itself is so vast, so compressed to the eye between earth and heaven, partaking of both ; so wonderful in the contrast between its ascertained immensity and its apparent lowness ; that it is the acquisition of a great idea to understand at least enough of its foldings and recesses, to be able to image the rest. Viewed from Chamouni, the evening before I started, it was scarcely possible to believe it the monarch of European mountains ;—it suggested associations rather of beauty than greatness ; resembling a gigantic mosque, with its minarets and domes—such as might almost have been made with hands. With what different feelings did I gaze on it the evening after my descent, when the want of aerial perspective was supplied by pain-bought experience ; when a faint, dark streak, bordering the glacier, denoted the enormous gulley ; when the

line of fretted white, on which the Grand Mulets seemed before to rest, expanded out into the mighty bosom of the rock-bound glacier, with its unfathomed crevices, and roar of hidden rivers, and all its border ice-caves of fantastical beauty ; when the brown rock, presenting the aspect of a small penthoused window, rose before me, the fortress-lord of ten thousand acres of snow ; when beyond, on the upward tract, “ wilds immeasurably spread seemed lengthening ;” and the small knot, which forms part of the figure called the “Dromedary’s Back,” rose the snow-dome of the star-lit solitude ! It may be said that I *knew* before that the mountain was more than 15,000 feet above the level of the sea ; or, which is more to the purpose, 13,000 feet above the floor of Chamouni ; but such knowledge was of no more worth, than the distance of a star from the earth, in which hundreds of millions of miles are just worth, to the imagination, the line of ciphers which represents them in the table. In explaining such an object, the reality expands the imagination ; the details, instead of detracting from the general impression, infinitely heighten it—perhaps the best test of all physical greatness, which is built up of things individually grand, and not mere vague outline ;—so that the idea of Mont Blanc is to me no longer a mere

diagram, but a living verity. Then there was the evening at the Grand Mulets, crowned by an imperishable vision, and followed by the midnight aspect of the heavens, which here, surveyed from a spot above the impurities of the denser atmosphere, assumed a darker hue, and justified the Homeric description, "Ether all opens;" and though it is true that the same glory would have been vouchsafed if this rock had been the summit of my ambition, still it would not have been attended with the same interest, half-wild, half-solemn, which surrounded it as an incident in the greater adventure. Although, therefore, the attempt cost about a thousand francs, one day's scruples, and another day's misgivings; some slight sense of disappointment at the moment of return; and some hours' labour, amounting to suffering; I rejoice that it was made. The suffering was, no doubt, severe; but, as far as it can now be recollected, it aids in realising the tracks along which it was borne; while the earth-grandeur, the cloud visions, and even the physical reliefs and enjoyments of the way, will enrich the past, so long as it shall have power to cast sweetness on the present and the future.

The next day, our last in Chamouni, was one of delicious repose. A walk, slow, lingering,

loitering, with frequent rests, to the source of the Arveron, was its only excursion; but it was not only happy in itself but important to me, as completing my acquaintance with the homelier aspects of the valley. The day, like the long procession of its predecessors, was bright and warm, but light fleecy clouds were sailing about the loftiest pinnacles of the range of Mont Blanc—like the incense of the mountain hollows—just sufficient for the employment of a lazy eye—while the sky itself was unclouded. We took our way through the thin and scattered groves, intersected by clear streams often gushing across our path, and causing many a pretty perplexity and still prettier circuit in search of a passage; along the floor carpeted with soft grass, intermingled with softer mosses, and gemmed with deep-coloured flowers, while many a jutting root of an old tree offered a seat. Through the thin veil of the tree-tops or the openings of their glistening stems, the Aiguilles were seen towering into the sky, elevated in the thought to their proper heights by the capricious visitations of the faint clouds; and, as we advanced, the Mer de Glace waved above a hundred small threads of sunlit water that trickled from its subject masses of ice-bound earth. Butterflies of all colours, but chiefly yellow, glimmered in

the lower air, which was fragrant with the odour of the fir-trees and the clumps of flowers. Following the valley to its last recess we reached a stony region—the wide seat of the Arveron—and winding our way beneath the bulging and discoloured ice on the right, and looking up to wooded acclivities on the left, we reached the huge dusky cavern which arches, with sullen grandeur, the flood of white water ever rushing from the foundations of the glacier, that rises above it in sullen indifference to so slight a diminution of its mass. Even here, however, the minor details are beautiful; the right-hand path is bordered by vivid grass and plenteous flowers; and when the rocky earth relieves the ribs of ice, it waves with shrubs and birches and the scarlet berries of the mountain-ash. In the evening, a satisfactory settlement with the guides and with our host; hearty farewells to the companions of the ascent; and one last gaze on the mountain top, lasting long after its pink hues had left it, closed a memorable week at Chamouni,—which we thought ourselves bound to leave at six in the morning.

CHAPTER IV.

RETURN FROM CHAMOUNI TO LONDON.

View from the Col de Balme—Martigny revisited—News of our unfelt disasters—Journey from Martigny to Vevay—Journey from Vevay to Thun by the Simmenthal—Saanen—Journey from Thun to Lucerne through the Emmenthal—Lucerne—Mont Pilatus—Journey from Lucerne by Zug to Zurich—Representation of Rossini's *Otello* at Zurich—Reasons why the opera is more agreeable than the dramatic *Othello*—Journey from Zurich to Basle—Grand distant view of the Alps—Rapid Journey by railway and steamboat to Cologne—Journey from Cologne to Brussels—Waterloo visited—Journey to Ostend and voyage to London—Concluding remarks on the sources of our enjoyment of scenery, and comparison between the scenery of Switzerland and that of Britain.

As, on our former visit, we left Chamouni by the Tête Noire, we chose now the *route* over the Col de Balme; and found, in the single view from the top, ample compensation for the glades and glooms of the romantic pass beneath us, though, when we reached the point where the roads diverge, I cast a longing look on the lovely pathway we had before trodden. Ascending thence by the side of the Arve, diminishing to its highest fountain, and here a pure rock-embedded stream, we reached the bleak common which surmounts the Col de Balme, a round wild summit-plain between far loftier

hills. The view on both sides from this spot is remarkable for embracing objects greater and with a more limited compass than perhaps any other in the Alps ; the chief, of course, being Mont Blanc, which here is seen on the side as well as front, and from a position so elevated as to enable the spectator to grasp a worthier notion of the huge masses of its higher snow than from the floor of Chamouni. The top here indicates the supremacy of its throne, without the aid of its evening tinge of pink being seen far above the line of Aiguilles and glaciers, and overlooking the Dôme du Gouté, which alone approaches it in height. From the elevation of the point of view, the roots of the mountain which chequer its lower aspect in Chamouni interposing between the streams of ice which the Glaciers pour into the depth of the valley, patches of dark pine grove, are here scarcely perceived ; so that the mountain looks one glistening mass of ice, wreathed into ample and graceful folds, unbroken except by the small intrusions of brown rock, which in two or three points start into view ; and is presented in the most dazzling contrast to the stern mountain ridge opposite, which ascends in a jagged line from the *Rochers Rouges* close beneath the eye to the summit of the Bréven—all being entirely snowless. Between the two, the valley lies, so

diminished by their heights, that though seen here at its full length, and just below the eye, it looks more like a deep pit than a broad populous valley, its rivers diminished to white threads, and its three churches to the miniatures of a model. Turning round towards Trient, you look across the narrow valley, here wholly concealed, within a basin of dark brown hills, of bold and simple forms; while the prospect to the right and left is shut in by neighbouring ledges of rock, over which the Buet towers. Thus everything, within the sphere of vision, has a noble simplicity; while the mossy earth on which you stand, pierced by rocks and peopled by one rocky stream and one small, strong-built cottage, allows the intrusion of no sentiment inconsistent with the sense of solitude and power. In the welcome shelter of the chalet, we peeped into two snug bed-rooms supplied with low beds, making us almost long to hear the winds raging through a winter's night, and enjoyed a breakfast consisting of a well-boiled knuckle of mutton; excellent bread and butter; and a bowl of cream; to which we added before starting a bottle of red wine, the colour of mulberry juice, and of a very palatable roughness.

The descent hence into the valley of Trient was to me inexpressibly tiresome; all descents indeed

are, appearing much longer than the corresponding ascent, from the absence of any demand for action; and here uncheered by any prospect, except where, towards its close, the white mass of the glacier of Trient, looking as if it were painfully compressed within the jaws of the narrow glen, gleamed through the trees. Our guides, however, gave an interest to one spot, by telling how a French traveller, two summers ago, had slipped thence, in his attempt to find a nearer way to the bottom; and having been missed by his companions, who had walked on before him from the chalet, was traced by the napoleons which had fallen from his waistcoat pocket in his fatal descent, and leading on from crag to crag on which they lay, conducted the party seeking him to his mangled remains. The more gradual ascent of the Forclaz, on the opposite side of the glen, was a relief to us, the eye frequently reposing on the rich meadows which stretch out to the first abrupt turn of the valley, and the path bordered by shrub-like thickets, until it joined that which we traversed two years ago from the Tête Noire. The long descent to Martigny did not seem to me so tedious as I then felt it—perhaps because, although a much longer descent than that from the Col de Balme, it was so strikingly dissimilar to it,—the former being

a steep spiral path, almost like a cork-screw staircase; and the latter a long regular slant—the former being shut in by hills, and the latter open in front to an enormous level valley—that the variety was curious. Martigny seemed to me also a tinge more cheerful—I felt a certain bounteousness of vegetation about it approaching to Italian, which imparted a sense of luxury to a quiet evening stroll among its orchard-bound lanes. Here we had the pleasure of learning that my son and myself had encountered more disasters than we were aware of in our attempt to ascend Mont Blanc, for the benefit of the gossips of Geneva, where a circumstantial narrative of our having lost our way on the mountain, of one of us being found dashed to pieces at the foot of a rock, and the other brought down so nearly exhausted as to be past all hope, had been largely circulated,—although, as in the case of Sir Peter Teazle and Mr. Surface, there was a difference as to the distribution of the calamities—which of the two was dead and which dying. A gentleman, whose name I did not learn, but who knew me by sight, and who had heard the story the day before at the Bergues hotel, started when we met in one of the long galleries of La Poste, and congratulated me cordially on being still among the living; and on being assured by me that my son was in the *salle-*

à-manger, suffering under no complaint except that of hunger. A friend of ours was shocked by the same authentic narrative, in a French *diligence*; and I scarcely know how it escaped the English newspapers, where, arriving at the deadest season of the year, it might have agreeably relieved the vacancy of intelligence; still less can I account for its invention; as, whatever we might have deserved, we had escaped without a scratch or an hour's illness.

Having ascertained that we had not time, within the utmost extent of the Eton holidays, to cross the Simplon, we determined to proceed by Vevay through the Simmenthal to Thun, thence to visit Lucerne, and find our way thence to Strasburg, there to renew our pledged allegiance to the Steam Company of Cologne. Being now on the great road, we posted from Martigny to Vevay—a delightful morning's journey—passing the great waterfall of the Sallenche; the old town and mountain-engulfed bridge of St. Maurice, which Rogers has vividly described in a few words—"where a key unlocks a kingdom"—through a cheerful succession of meadows, beyond which the Lake of Geneva opens a limitless expanse of blue, like an ocean bay—through the long old-fashioned lake-side town of Villeneuve, which, with

its low walls mouldering on Roman foundations, and dingy alleys disclosing the deep blue water, is worthy to be described by Dickens—beneath the Hotel Byron, which needs no description, and beside the Castle of Chillon, which I have tried to describe—and so arrived in time for the splendid *table d'hôte* of the Three Crowns. The waterfall, like the Staubach and the Nant d'Arpenaz, springs from its channel into air, but not, like them, dashed into spray, falls in an unbroken column of 120 feet in height, to the channel by which it passes across the highway to the Rhône. As its body of water, which is large, gushes from a precipice near the side of the road, and presents its entire force to the traveller, without any accessory either to break its effect or to divide the interest by beauty, it surprises more than any fall of a mountain torrent by which I remember to have been startled. But far more deeply impressive is a little quiet scene within the sound of its roar—the stream from the Tête Noire gliding from a chasm in the mountain just wide enough for its passage—only discernible a few yards on its awful way, but winding so black and still from its grey recesses of rock, that it seems worthy to be caverned among nature's most solemn mysteries. The evening at Vevay

was of the most splendid serenity ;—the rich sun-lights giving place to the paler influences of the moon upon the water ; so that when the small boats were discerned quivering among the soft lights or starting across them, and the visitors of the hotel paced its garden terrace in social groups, or lingered to listen to the instruments and the voices of gallant and fair amateurs of music in the saloon, I could not help acknowledging to myself that however little Lord Byron's home of love might vindicate its divinity in the broad day-light, this scene might possibly elicit some tender confessions which had eluded all the balls of the last London season.

At Vevay we found a *voiturier* from Thun, who offered himself to convey us thither, and whom we liked so well, that we engaged him thence for all our Swiss journeyings, till we parted at Basle. He was young and good-tempered—spoke a little English and a good deal of French—wore no mustachios or beard, saying, “I do not cut up my face like a garden”—a just view of the subject ; for one can understand an entire relinquishment of the care of such matters to nature, but not such a fantastic intermeddling with her growth, as perpetually invites attention to features and expressions which nature never made for ad-

miration. Under his auspices, we retraced our road to Bulle; dined there at a coarse but plentiful *table d'hôte* at mid-day, and gazed again at the finely proportioned swellings of its valley; and then spent a lovely afternoon, prolonged into the darkness in the ride to Château d'Œx, where, in a good *auld-world* inn, we found a plentiful supper. The road half encircling the fortress of Gruyères, a huge old castle, which is now devoted to the warehousing of the cheeses that maintain the reputation of its name,—and then diving deep into green recesses beside a clear broad stream, had the pastoral and sequestered air of a cross-country lane in the midst of England, only bordered by richer loveliness, and so narrow for miles, that we could only hope no carriage would meet us—for to pass one seemed impossible. We started at daybreak for Thun, and stopped to breakfast at Saanen, the ancient capital of the valley of the Upper Sarine, one of the most primitive places in Switzerland; suggesting to us what an English market town, in the midst of an agricultural district, was five hundred years ago, “with a difference,” no doubt, in the materials and forms of the houses, but still breathing of the same imperfect civilisation, simple manners, and homely kindness. The chief street, narrow,

paved with small stones, with a gutter in the centre,—the irregular lines of houses, though of wood, yet so old; so charred by the sun and beaten by the storm; so hardened by the seasoning of centuries; that you could only by examination discern their material; some shrinking back from the frontage, some approached by wide pent-housed porches,—all with pointed roofs of different heights and varied inclinations,—all, even the humblest, embossed with carved work; the shops twinkling with small square windows, in which the wares were scantily exhibited, as if to repel extravagance, and invite those only who had urgent need of the commodities, except two or three suburban stalls (the pride, no doubt, of the town), where, displayed with blameless ostentation, huge clouted shoes, ponderous velveteen breeches, and other massive pieces of male attire, were relieved by the gentler forms of caps and bunches of cherry-coloured ribbon, and flanked by a handful of umbrellas of red and yellow and bright blue—all spoke the secluded mart of a people whose wants are few and whose vanities rarer. The hotel called the *Landhaus*, which was also used as the council-house, where we rested, was quite in keeping with these external peculiarities. The entrance to it from the street was by a wide

wooden staircase, filling the passages, like the steps to one of our granaries, which led to a large casemented room on the first floor, curiously carved, divided by long tables of dark wood, on which scattered drinking cups gave hints of the last evening's revel. Across this room we were conducted to a smaller chamber, where the furniture was of the same ancient fashion ; and soon heartily enjoyed a breakfast, served on plain white plates, consisting of tolerable bread, excellent butter, fresh eggs, thick cream, cheese, and cold boiled mutton, very nicely flavoured, and very well boiled ; and the charge was consistent with the good old times of which every thing else savoured. The landlord, a tall gaunt figure, with a certain air of simple dignity, observing that I took an interest in the house, showed me over it, and I found it all in keeping. He remarked that the principal room on the first floor, in which " a solemn supper " had been holden the night before, was the hall in which the councillors (of whom he was one) held their meetings ; pointed out the Landamman's old chair, a high-backed piece of venerable carved work, which he said existed beyond all record ; and in the kitchen, an enormous room, now half filled with cheeses and sides of bacon, expatiated with honest pride on a fire-place at which an ox might have


been roasted, and a huge chimney opening direct on the sky, black with the soot of many generations. We left the good old house, which its owner informed us had stood for more than five hundred years, with a wish that it might stand to shelter as unsophisticated manners and as kind hearts, for five hundred years to come.

We soon crossed a little stream, over which a ruined castle held its state, from the Canton Vaud into the Canton of Berne; and saw everywhere around us the indications of wealth, cleanliness and plenty, which make the Simmenthal the pride of Switzerland;—large wooden houses, often curiously carved, and almost always hallowed by texts of Scripture in old letters on the front, and sometimes dignified by a date indicating a great age for the edifice, and proving how dearly the sense of antiquity is cherished even under the simplest laws, and by men initiated only in the most practical lessons of rural life; great wealth of flocks and herds, and groups of plump blue-eyed merry children. At one place, where we stopped beneath an enormous tree to refresh the horses, the innkeeper added to his character of host that of chief baker of the neighbourhood; and the scale on which the operations were proceeding, the heaps of loaves and yards of long

bread, denoted an excellent trade and good appetites in the customers. The country, however, was not so beautiful as that through which we passed on the preceding evening, except in one spot, where the river Simmen, which accompanied and occasionally intersected our way, almost encircled a mass of rock, fringed and crowned by noble trees, until we reached Weissenbourg, where we dined at a pleasant hotel shut in by the mountains. From hence the scene expanded—the river grew larger approaching its mouth—and between the two great portals of the Simmenthal, the Stockhorn, and the Neisen, we passed to the banks of the Lake of Thun; but the twilight, which had been prematurely deepened by a storm, enabled us to discern little beyond the noble proportions of the objects around us. It was quite dark long before we reached Thun; and reposed at one of the embowered hotels within one garden, which seem more like the summer pavilions of a luxurious monarch than the branches of an establishment for the entertainment of travellers.

On the following day, we left Thun—not without casting a longing look down its lake towards Interlachen, less affluent in the artificial appliances of beauty, but more within the circle of great objects—and, under the light govern-

ment of our pleasant coachman, proceeded on our way to Lucerne. The journey was divided into two days,—our resting place being a clean rustic inn, the Bear, which was sweetened by large myrtles fringing its windows, lying close the small village of Signau, below the ruins of a castle. The way had little that stands out in the memory, lying chiefly through a scene of rich valleys—which would have enchanted Jeanie Deans; for while their pastures of the richest green, sustaining unnumbered herds and flocks, would excite her admiration for “a braw cattle-feeding country,” the rocks above them would satisfy the utmost longing for natural grandeur which Salisbury Crags could nurture. Expecting from the position of Lucerne to descry it from a distance, I was startled when, at a sharp turn of the road, its grey walls, surmounted by massive towers, rose almost close to us, presenting a beautiful contrast to the unbounded luxuries of the swelling fields and orchards around it. The interior of the city scarcely realises this promise; the streets are irregular and narrow, without being reconciled to the mind by the vestiges of age; the shops dark, yet with civic pretence; and a feeling of dirt and closeness pervaded the whole; while pirated works of English authors




evinced the commercial principle of the free traders; and frequent display of small prints of small picturesque points of Swiss scenery, showed that we had changed a people unconsciously enjoying their country, for citizens reckoning up its charms for sale. There is, however, the relief of the broad blue stream of the Lower Reuss, just issued from the lake, rushing among the thick-set houses; the long bridges, with their open pictures of the lake and meadows, and their covered quaint pictures of Scripture and Swiss history; and, far above all, there is the Lion, saddening and sweetening the thoughts of all who come within the circle of its charm.

We remained for a day at Lucerne,—not very satisfactorily employed because without any definite purpose—chiefly illustrated by a long morning visit to the Lion, and an evening walk up a long hill, on top of which we obtained a noble view of Mount Pilatus. There is something awfully grand in every aspect of this pile of rock, which makes it a fit abode for the restless spirit of the Roman whom conscious corruption and guilty weakness involved in a crime far beyond “the reach of his soul,” and invested his name with a terrible importance, of which he little dreamed when he yielded to the suggestions of his craven nature.

When bathed in sunshine, the broken architecture of its top, the rocks which rise around it like unfinished columns, and the blocks which seem slanted among them, complete the idea of the Tower of Babel suddenly stopped in its progress; but when its summit is partially seen breaking through dark clouds, it suggests more fearful images of splintering thunder and sacrificial ruin. No snow-wreath lightens the impression, or detracts from the sense of earth-born power, either stagnant in mid-air by divine prohibition, or stricken by divine vengeance.

Early in the next morning, we left Lucerne for Zurich, resting at the small town of Zug, where we spent two delicious hours on the margin of its lovely lake, spreading out its azure beneath the dark banks of the Righi, over the shoulder of which the grander Pilatus still frowned into the landscape. We arrived in time to dine at the Hotel "Baur," and to learn that there would be a special performance at the theatre of Rossini's opera of *Otello*, with Madame Schroeder-Devrient for the heroine. In addition to that longing after dramatic representations which one feels at a distance from London, the remembrance of this lady when she performed *Fidelio* some years ago—her bold, simple, impressive style of acting, akin to



the ordinary passages of Pasta's, induced me to propose that we should sacrifice a precious hour of twilight to witness the performance; and, to me at least, the sacrifice was repaid. The part of Desdemona was, indeed, unsuited to her age and figure, and I should think not well suited to her voice; but there was an earnestness and directness in her acting—a conception of a tragic situation and feeling, which, appealing to higher sympathies than those excited by personal loveliness and grace, found their answer. It is always pleasant to witness a struggle in an artist who must affect us through the medium of physical qualifications, against the ravages of time, and that injustice which the theatrical public, at least in England, commit when they condemn actresses as too old for characters which youth, except by some rare felicity, could never find wisdom to appreciate, or depth of passion to vivify, or skill to realise. Madame Deverint's exertions were deemed so successful by the manager, that a sort of ovation followed the opera; the curtain rose and exhibited half a dozen youths in black, shouldering huge flambeaux, while the heroine came forward and was crowned with laurel by the hands of the lady who manages the theatre, and who is herself an authoress of many dramas of at least temporary

attraction. In other respects the opera was well performed, by the actor who played Othello as fairly as the part allowed; and though it is despoiled both of the fury and the tenderness of its dramatic prototype, it affords considerable opportunities for energetic action. The story of Othello, softened by musical expression, deprived at once of the prodigious intellectual power developed in Shakspeare's tragedy, and of the familiar pathos and horror with which that power is blended, is to me, I own, rendered more agreeable for the purpose of scenic exhibition by the adapting process.

It is, indeed, true that the dialogue of the tragedy, which is lost in the opera, is adapted to the domestic nature of its subject, and to the varied characters of its strongly contrasted persons, with a curious felicity scarcely equalled elsewhere even by its author. As the diction of *Romeo and Juliet* has its own honied sweetness in the breathings of young and sudden love, and its own mournful beauty in the movements of despair and anticipated death; as that of *Coriolanus* bounds with a triumphant freedom, echoing the proud sincerity and generous scorn of the single-hearted soldier; as that of *Hamlet* floats in river-like meanderings through the waverings of purpose and the mazes of thought; as that of *Macbeth* thickens like the light of the

evening of Banquo's murder, and becomes stiffened and embossed with the imagery of regal guilt,—so that of Othello is quick, vivid, glancing ; combining the ease of conversation with the charm of melody ; and rising and sinking with the movements of the heart which it interprets. But can it be denied that, even as pruned by modern delicacy, it is disfigured, not only by coarse words, but by allusions and images, which if now heard for the first time would not be endured by those whose duty it is to protect the ears of the “ fair and innocent ” from offence, and their hearts from pollution, passages so offensive when deliberately examined, that one can scarcely help suspecting that in the instance of a play, which has been represented so often, and given scope to so much transcendent acting, audiences have reversed the usual process, and instead of looking beyond the actor's gesticulations and tones to the author's meaning, have forgotten the meaning in the symbol, and, accustomed to witness the energetic expression of one performer after another in the utterance of certain words, have almost ceased to regard the import of the words themselves ?* Can it be denied that the action of

* With the feeling which I have expressed respecting the public utterance of these passages, it is impossible to quote the instances at length. But I may refer to the lines which precede

the play discloses a series of insults and injuries to innocent womanhood, of which the last is not the worst? And though these may be compensated to the reader, who may be able to reject or disbelieve them, by the mighty alternations of passion in the Moor, *through* whom rather than *by* whom they are inflicted, does their scenic exhibition admit of such compromise? Take, for example, the scene in the fourth act, in which Othello, having ordered Emilia to bring Desdemona to him, pours out his fury on her innocent head—is the shocking fantasy which dictates the arrangements of that scene, from the first dismissal of Emilia to the casting down of the purse at her feet—rendered less real by embracing a speech as exquisite in its pathos, as ever seemed to tremble with the vibrations of a breaking heart! Whether beyond the ebb and flow of Othello's passion, as his strange credulity yields to

Othello's noble farewell to the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war;" the image of "flies in shambles," and the speech in which it occurs; the description given by Iago of Cassio's pretended words in sleep; the directions of Othello to Emilia both before and after his fearful interview with Desdemona in the fourth act; and Othello's own repetition to Desdemona on her death-bed, of Cassio's alleged confession; as containing expressions which no actor ought to be compelled or incited to utter before a mixed audience, however they may be excused in the author, by reference to the manners of the age in which he wrote, or redeemed (as they are ten thousand fold) by the genius which has vivified with a diviner life the worlds without us and within us.

the falsehoods of which he is the dupe, or his returning love rejects them; not the workings of jealousy which "makes the meat it feeds on" out of innocent trifles, but the oscillation of belief in reiterated inventions; there is any great tragic purpose worked out through the sufferings of the two victims of Iago's malice or cupidity, or revenge, or sport; whether the absence of a real cause for the rage and agony, which are so exquisitely diversified by the self-references of the chief sufferer to those personal disqualifications of colour and age which, beyond hope, had seemed overcome by the confidence of a generous and loving heart, any passion or motive has been attributed to the prompter of all this wretchedness and guilt, which in nature or true art can balance the picture, and make his villanous triumph endurable,—are questions which the performance of the great drama suggests to those whose idolatry of genius is not wholly blind, but which are independent of the principal objections to its stage representation*.

* Mr. Hazlitt, the most subtle and discriminating of all Shakespeare's English adorers, thus sums up his apology for the character of Iago, in his criticism on Mr. Kean's performance of the part :—

"The general ground-work of the character of Iago is not absolute malignity, but a want of moral principle, or an indifference to the real consequences of the actions, which the meddling perversity of his disposition and love of immediate excitement lead him

Yielding to none in admiration of its familiar and terrible beauties, I own that their total loss in the

to commit. He is an amateur of tragedy in real life ; and instead of exercising his ingenuity on imaginary characters, or forgotten incidents, he takes the bold and more desperate course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connections, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution. The character is a complete abstraction of the intellectual from the moral being ; or, in other words, consists in an absorption of every common feeling in the virulence of his understanding, the deliberate wilfulness of his purposes, and in his restless, untameable love of mischievous contrivance."

This ingenious theory suggests more refined springs of action than those which appear on the surface ; than the suspicion of a domestic wrong which is just hinted at and then thrown aside ; than the hatred of "a daily beauty" in Cassio's life ; or the love of Roderigo's jewels. That there is in Iago a great vivacity of perverted intellect—not in the inventions which are mere falsehoods, aided by the theft of a handkerchief, and an artifice which casts Othello into a swoon in a scene which is not acted—but in his dazzling fence with envenomed words—is true ; but that Shakespeare intended Iago's character to be the impersonation of intellectual power, directed for its mere gratification to crime, I cannot believe. If this view of the character were just, it would be lamentable, as it would present a signal instance of the deliberate abuse of the richest gifts with which a human mind has been endowed by its Creator. For though in the waywardness of our nature, a love of action and a sense of power may sometimes prompt to cruel deeds, no being, in the mould of humanity, was ever impelled by such motives to devise, in cold blood, such schemes of wretchedness as Iago plans, and to execute them by means so base as those which he employs. Would then a man gifted beyond his fellows of all ages with the power of multiplying creations of individualised character, and breathing into them the breath of a deathless life, rightly employ this faculty in shaping an impersonation of low but vivid intellectual power, exerted only from the love of its exercise ; in reconciling the spirit of such a

musical adaptation of the story, was more than compensated by the absence of the allusions and images with which they are too closely interwoven to be severed; and which I have never felt or lamented so much as when I have endeavoured to reconcile conscientious objections to the enjoyment, in the acted drama, of the most delightful of all intellectual recreations.

On the morning after the triumph of Madame Schroeder-Devrient, which was doubtless made sweeter by being rendered in the scene of her youthful successes, we left Zurich, notwithstanding

fiend to relations of flesh and blood, by associating with it lighter vices and aims, and even the show of good-fellowship, which draw it within the sphere of our habits and sympathies; thus stamping upon it the poet's warrant for a living man; and then representing its arts as triumphant over the simplicity of a generous nature, and making that nature its instrument, over female loveliness and virtue? I say *triumphant*, because, though Iago is led off in dogged silence to a threatened punishment, his work is achieved; his very detection is essential to the perfection of the misery he has wrought; and to the spectators who have witnessed the "vile success" of his stratagems, the rack with which he is menaced is an empty name. But I believe that Shakspeare dreamed of no such unholy purpose; that he wrote on fervently to supply the agencies for the scenes which lived before him, and to produce the fore-shadowed catastrophe; that the genius which often, with such divine felicity, moulded his rapid creations into harmony beyond the reach of art, has for once presented disproportion; and that the question which Othello, in his mortal agony, so naturally desires his attendants to ask of Iago—"Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?" and which the "demi-devil" refuses to answer, might have been asked as vainly of the mighty poet who moulded him.

ing the temptation to remain one day at the least, and visit all its wonders, its hospital, its public school, its library, its manufactories, its town-hall, which a gentleman, whom we accidentally met at the Hotel Baur, held out to us, and whose pleasant enthusiasm on behalf of his adopted city rivalled that of some of the most distinguished inhabitants of that famed town which owes its existence to the genial and graceful humour of Mr. Poole. We attempted to see the Library; but, of course, the Librarian was keeping holiday on this particular morning (our friend never knew him take such a liberty before); and, therefore, we missed the autograph letters of Lady Jane Grey, which would have interested us more than the manufactories; nor did we meet our English-loving boatman. We went, accompanied by Zurich's blue steam, the Limmat, to Baden; a simple place compared to its romantic and ruining German namesake; but nestling in a hollow of peculiar beauty. We dined here; and, while the repast was preparing, climbed the topmost height of some lofty castle ruins, which are so blended with the trees and earth, and flowers, of a charming succession of walks and staircases winding spirally from the densest part of the town, and directly overlooking its streets, that you cannot tell where the natural

begins or the artificial ends—a delightful confusion; and at the top, amidst battlements like rocks, and rocks like battlements, commanding a lovely prospect of the deep valley. Hence we proceeded through Brugg, seated almost in hearing of the ripple of the three great rivers—the Limmat, the Reuss, and the Aar, which join in a plain below it, to make a glorious contribution to the Rhine. After leaving Brugg, the road rises with a gentle inclination for several miles, which tempted me to walk on alone before the carriage. Having reached the summit just as the sun was setting, I was enchanted by a view of the Alps, far more comprehensive, though more distant, than that from the Cathedral of Berne, or from the last ridge of the Jura. As I believed that I had quitted the snowy mountains for years, if not for ever, I felt a delight I cannot express in this unexpected opportunity—and such an opportunity!—of bidding to their congregated majesties a solemn farewell. I was alone; a huge weather-stained forlorn inn, standing amidst tottering stables and outhouses at the crest of the ascent, made the solitude more perceptible; the table-land stretched tame and almost objectless for miles on one side; on the other, a wood descended to the plain of a huge valley, in which the Castle of Hapsburg dimly

seen, the small cradle of the imperial House of Austria, seemed to whisper of half-forgotten crimes and tyrannies, and of warriors long ago mingled with the dust ; and beyond, rimming the immense horizon, were the innumerable icy pinnacles and domes ; and though they had mostly grown spectral in the gray light, two long slants among them yet glowed with the western sun, like some passage of long past experience suddenly gleaming from among the mass of forgotten things, in happy distinctness, at a chance flash of memory. I gazed upon them till all their forms grew indistinct, and then slowly and sadly descended the hill ; but, becoming half-alarmed at the long interval which had elapsed since I left the carriage, without being overtaken by it, I returned to the top and awaited its arrival, and there tried to distinguish some Alpine shape in the misty distance, but in vain—I had looked my last. All was right ; the carriage came up, and we went on to Frick in the dark ; and thence the next morning to Basle. Nothing worthy recollection presented itself during this day's journey, except the Rhine at Rheinfelden, where we breakfasted, rushing beneath the old village tottering on its edge and beneath the bridge which crosses it with an almost fearful power. We reached Basle in time to lose ourselves in its narrow

streets, in a search after no less an object than its cathedral ; to find it and to feel the peculiar majesty of its masses of reddish brown ; and to admire the vast baths on the Rhine, to which we were informed, at almost a nominal price, the people of the city have access—a noble use to make of this noble river. It may almost be doubted whether the duty of washing the population of a densely-built and closely-inhabited city does not even precede in urgency, if not in importance, that of teaching it. When once the “unwashed” artificer is unwashed no longer, he is freed from all which, even in point of taste, can excuse a reluctance to his complete recognition as a brother by the loftiest in station or in intellect of his fellow-men, and to his cordial admission to their sympathy in those great objects which good men have all in common.

By the combined powers of railway, steam and the Cologne Company, we passed in one long day from Basle to Mannheim, embarking at Strasbourg from the same wharf in the midst of the town at which we had landed,—and in another day, almost as long, from Mannheim to Cologne ; two prodigious days, cheered in the intervals of scenic interest by two novels of Mr. James—“The False Heir,” and “Morley Ernstein,”—

pirated editions of course, which we bought for a trifle at Lucerne, and which, with other English books, which we had purchased, in justice to their author's copyright we threw away at the mouth of the Thames. Another day brought us from Cologne to Brussels—allowing an hour for the comfort of an excellent dinner at the *table d'hôte* at Verviers, and the discomfort of two hours' delay at the station at Liége, occasioned by the detected imperfection of the rope which ought to have drawn the train to the top of the inclined plane with which the railway commences,—and might have been discovered still more disagreeably a few moments later. As of course no substitute was ready, we were obliged to wait while another rope was obtained—some said woven. The interval, however, was not devoid of amusement; for the travellers of all classes and several nations came out from the carriages in which they were seated, and solaced the time with such refreshments as the neighbouring taverns supplied, scattering themselves, in motley groups, about the lumber-choked yard; and though uttering many expressions of impatience, were generally merrier when they really started than when they stopped. Nor was the imperturbable gravity of the superintendent, who was pointed at, talked at, and talked

to, as the cause of the evil, the least amusing feature in the aspect of the scene: he looked on without moving a muscle; generally stood mute as if not hearing when pelted with inquiries as to the probability of the train starting at all; and when, at last, a very shrill lady-voice pierced his dull ear, shook his head so awfully as to put an end to all attempts at questioning.

It was late in the evening before the train reached Brussels—a city wholly new to us—but, perhaps “for this night only,” the time of our arrival was fortunate; for, to our amazement, the city was one blaze of light: statues, squares, pavilions, park-gates, all flashed with coloured lamps, or waved with open jets of fire—a scene of perfect enchantment; for I never witnessed an illumination in which fire of various colours had so entirely displaced the common aspect of things; nor did the scene lose its lustre in our eyes, when we learned that it was thus decked with flame, in honour of our own Queen, who slept that night at a country palace of the King of Belgium, a few miles distant from his capital. We were fortunate enough to escape from the terrible imprisonment of the omnibus, which kidnapped us at the station, in time to obtain accommodation at one of the hotels, which were crowded with

visitors, whom the Royal guests had attracted to Brussels.

The next day we spent in exploring the field of Waterloo, which I heartily wish we had left unvisited. Never, surely, was the scene of any great action so far despoiled of interest by petty, harassing, vexatious details as this. We could not, indeed, expect much of striking memorial in a mere battle-field ; vastness and silence—the faithful preservation of such vestiges as are most closely associated with the master-minds that here played out the game of death—are all that could be wished for ; but these, as far as possible, have been confused, or destroyed. As if the level plain, beneath which so many brave soldiers are reposing, were not as appropriate a monument as a mound of the same earth, the inclination of the ground which the British forces occupied, has been violated, in order to scoop out materials for an ugly mass of dirt, surmounted by a frightful lion :—O, how unlike the monumental lion of Lucerne ! The scene of carnage is changed for one of civil spoliation ; for every step is infested with lazy, urgent guides, or beggars ; some thrusting their physical infirmities, some their false relics, in your face ; and some putting forward nothing but their sturdy prayers, ready to be turned into curses ; all around

you is pettiness, pretence, and plunder. A kindred spirit of mean exaction pervades the miserable hotels, at one of which you are obliged to stop,—the host charging you the price of *Chambertin* for *vin ordinaire* you cannot drink ; and the waiter is astonished if you do not pay him handsomely for bringing it into the room, as if he had some hand in winning the battle ; while the low, whitewashed walls, and pot-house chairs, and flaring-coloured prints, complete the sense of discomfort. Then, in order to substitute the idea of carnage in its shocking realities—too recent to be blended with events which are removed by time beyond a relation to surviving sorrows—for the greater feelings the scene should suggest, as the mighty witness to the adamantive part of British nature and the catastrophe of Napoleon's career, you are beset with such relics as the skull of a soldier, with teeth of horrid whiteness, to indicate that he fell in the bloom of life. The day was intensely hot; the road dusty, flinty, arid ; so that the shade of the dullest fir grove I ever traversed was a welcome solace ; and the *voiturier* deaf to all our entreaties that he would move faster than at a foot's pace ; who thus gave to our misery a ludicrous completeness.

There was only one moment in which I felt the

awful spirit of the scene:—passing through a small angular paled garden, planted with dusty shrubs, to reach the steps of the mound (for which, of course, you pay) where some bees were buzzing over two or three wild flowers, the faint noise rendering the sense of stillness deeper, suggested the contrast between the images of peaceful life and the horrors which had raged there; but the feeling was immediately dissipated by a tribe of dirty boys with bullets and brass buttons for sale. We went, however, to the play in the evening; and *assisted* in more than the French sense at the welcome of a fair and frightened *débutante* in a lively operetta; and became reconciled to ourselves and our species.

The next day we left Brussels for Ostend, passing by Ghent and Bruges—just catching a glimpse of their old historical towers from the railway-stations. Those of Ghent had a charm for me beyond that of history, for they have been associated for all time with the meditative beauty of that great dramatic poem, Philip Van Artevelde; steeped by genius in its serenest light; and now recalling many wise sentiments and thoughts shaded with beauty, which have an immortal home beneath their shadows.

At the railway-station of Ghent, where a stop-

page of some length occurred, and where the carriages were changed, we were involved in perplexity which the hurry of the scene increased, and from which we were relieved by the active courtesy of an English nobleman, whom we did not then know, and to whom we were unknown except as his country-people, travelling without a courier to help, or a servant to retard them. As he afterwards discovered himself to be one with whose affairs our public have been often busy, and who has been perhaps as much abused as any one of his time, I think it right to allude to kindnesses which, under other circumstances, should rest in the privacy in which they were offered. After he had placed his servant at our command, and pressed his fruit and Champagne on our ladies, and carried us through the intricacies of the railway-office, he excited our surprise by speaking familiarly of the Duke of Wellington as his uncle, and apprised us, before he knew our names, that he was the Mr. Long Wellesley, of whom, as he said, we had heard so much, and was now Lord Wellesley. His courtesies did not terminate with the exigency which had first called them forth; for, when we reached Ostend, he insisted on showing us the way to the proper hotel; kept off the crowd of idlers who hung on our march with good-

humoured pertinacity ; carried one of our packages ; and refused to leave us until he had consigned us to the especial care of the landlady, with injunctions to attend to our comfort, which were followed in a manner which proved that a genial influence had not been exerted for us in vain. As I cannot help regarding this series of unaffected kindnesses bestowed on strangers without any claim but that of country on the party who offered them, as indicating something beyond the value of the mere acts themselves—valuable as they were to us—I hope it is not unfitting, against the manifold evil which has been thought and said of Lord Wellesley, to offer the evidence of facts, which, if slight in themselves, speak to me of good which, having deeply impressed us, may have a similar influence on the opinions of others, who, like me, know only the *outlines* of a life's history, to which a little true personal knowledge may impart a happier colouring.

After dinner, we enjoyed a fine sunset from the long shelving bank of Ostend ; embarked at nine o'clock on board the steamer ; and, after a calm night's passage, reached *our* custom-house early on the following day. What we there suffered and saw, before we were finally dismissed, is not now worth relating or recollecting ; for I have faith in

the old maxim "that when things have come to the worst they must mend," and, therefore, I feel assured that an amendment in the processes of this scene of English discredit and of all mankind's discomfort, if not already accomplished, must be at hand.

In estimating the wealth with which the mind may be endowed by excursions as rapid as these into foreign lands, I think it will be found to consist almost exclusively in the images which the scenes of the external world have impressed upon it, and in the feelings they have excited. It would be obviously absurd to hope that, from intercourse so transient and imperfect as the railway carriage, the steamboat and the *table d'hôte* allow, any knowledge of the character of the people of the fair regions at which a holiday traveller glances can be acquired, beyond a few picturesque aspects of glancing light and shadow. You cannot, indeed, pass through any section of Germany, however rapidly, without becoming sensible to the charm of that unaffected good-nature with which all classes seem imbued; associated in the women with a quiet serene grace, a benevolent repose of manner; and in the men, especially the young students, with a brotherly affection for each other, and a disposition to be

and to make happy, which refers their university duels to the mere tyranny of custom. Indeed, the gashes which these encounters have left, may generally be observed scarring faces which beam with good-humour, and show how little concern hatred or envy, or any real passion, has in producing those passages of foolish bravery. In Switzerland, it would be a sad waste of precious hours to spend them in endeavouring to pluck out the heart of the mysteries of character which lie within the human forms which are dwarfed by the mountains among which they move and perish, while the mountains themselves, with the snows they sustain and the streams they nurture, freely expand to the gaze, and invite the eye, the heart, and the imagination to concur in holding the most intimate communion with their *grandeurs*.

But the knowledge of scenery which is achieved by such excursions is all clear, unalloyed, and priceless gain ; for it not only enriches the chamber of memory with the pictures which can be expanded at will, but nourishes the power of appreciating all other kindred scenes, and redoubles the charm of those we may afterwards enjoy at home. When, therefore, we pursue the inevitable comparison between the alpine scenery of

Switzerland and that which lies among our own mountains of Scotland, Wales, and the north of England, we institute no invidious scrutiny, but trace out the links of that process by which familiarity with one form of nature increases the facility of appreciating others resembling it, and heightens the enjoyment of all.

The pleasure which is derived from the contemplation of fine scenery is, I apprehend, nearly in proportion to the power with which the mind grasps its colours and forms, and realises a kindred between their attributes and its own. The mere presentment of the mightiest external varieties of the earth's surface to the eye of curiosity, except in the comparatively rare instances when they melt into harmonious pictures, can excite, at most, only a sort of stupified wonder. To the youth of a poet, gifted with a peculiar sense of beauty, they may be, as they were to Wordsworth, a passion, "an appetite, a feeling, and a love;" though even then it may be doubted whether the premature development of deeper sources of pleasure has not unconsciously blended the spiritual with the external. But to children, in general, the Book of Nature, spread out before them in all its wildest sublimities, lies unread; and it is not until they have begun, not merely to

think and feel, but to reflect on their own past thoughts and feelings, which they have gradually associated with the scenes in which their emotions have been born and cherished, that they begin to understand and to love the world without them. In this respect, the experience of every youth of sensibility and reflection, is a picture in little of the history of his species. Old as the world has grown in the arts of life and death, and early as divine inspiration enkindled the spirit of poetry in its favoured inheritors, it is only in times comparatively modern that the mind seems to have awakened to a sense of its external grandeurs. In the Hebrew sacred poetry, each image is singly contemplated as attesting the glory of God, or is employed as the symbol of his terrors; the breath of a pastoral simplicity is wafted from the depths of patriarchal ages; Mount Sinai flashes with the terrors of the law; and the harp of David sometimes trembles with the sweet influences of sky and earth; but there is no picture, enriched by the heart's experiences, to break the elemental vastness of the imagery in which the voice of eternity is heard. In the Homeric poems,—all vivid as they are—

“ As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at Midsummer,”

the pictures are of the camp, the battle, the city, the fleet—not of the mountain and flood; and the frequent similes by which they are studded, instead of indicating an aptitude in the poet's mind for informing the shapes of the universe with life and passion, or clothing human affections and powers with the aspects of matter, show, by the imperfect associations which often introduce them, and the mosaic air they give to the composition they variegate, how faintly the sympathies between the world of matter and of thought were perceived even by the genius which inspired them. As the poetry of Greece became more refined, the sentiment of scenery was still further repressed, until it was lost in the tendency to make all things subservient to the beauty of form. It breathes again in Virgil, but still with a subdued and courtly sweetness; and scarcely is felt again till it bursts out in lusty life in Chaucer. Hence, after mingling with the flush of Elizabethan genius; enriching the passion of Shakespear; mantling in the luxury of Fletcher; and embossing the stateliness of Milton: it was crushed by the iron sense of Dryden; dissipated amidst the artificial brilliancies of Pope; and feebly held its obscure way beneath the frost-like etiquette and sparkling conceit of our Augustan age. In the re-

vival of the true poetical spirit it has expanded triumphantly among us : breaking forth with gorgeous enthusiasm in Thomson ; becoming coldly pure in Cowper ; shedding a consecrating influence on a multitude of glorious scenes in Scott ; and enabling us to consecrate all scenes for ourselves by the teachings of Wordsworth. No one can doubt that the deeper seriousness which Christianity has shed through our human life, has attached itself to the silent forms of nature, and has given them an interest which, reflected and reduplicated by our poetry and romance, is now not confined to men of genius or even to men of thoughtful leisure, but is felt more or less vividly as a pervading sentiment of common existence ; gleaming in upon the busiest hours ; and deepening the long-drawn sigh for repose from the bustle of the world, with a longing after the visitations of beauty and the approaches of wisdom.

It may, at least, be doubted whether the love which the inhabitants of mountain districts bear to their father-land, involves any sense of the grandeur of its scenes, beyond the sanctity which the few events of their simple lives attach to the objects immediately associated with them. As far as I have been able to ascertain, a feeling of grandeur and beauty is not often expanded


within them ; though the semblances of it soon become affected, when tourists teach them its value in the market for the romantic. However this may be, I believe the experience of most of those whose sensibilities are awakened by the presence of material greatness, will concur with my own, that the first effect is that of wonder and depression ; that the spirits sink among great mountain tops almost as if beneath a weight of care ; and some shivering sense of oppression comes over us like that which I have imperfectly, and, perhaps, extravagantly, described as chilling me in the huge Alpine solitude among the heights above Airolo, at the foot of the St. Gothard. This feeling of lonely sadness arises from the susceptibility of the mind to the impressions of the regions around it, with a conscious want of powers adequate to spiritualize the gigantic images and to make them its own ; and it will continue so long as there is intellectual activity enough to desire a communion which there is not force enough to realise. He who is thus subjected to the forms of matter feels like a dwarf in the home of giants, which, he is told, should be his home and is his inheritance, but in which he discovers nothing for him but frowning tyranny. But to an active sensibility the recurrence not

only to the same scene, but to scenes on a scale of correspondent or kindred majesty, gradually overcomes the strangeness; "the divinity that stirs within us" asserts its relation to the huge shapes around us; old sensations of tranquil beauty cleave to the lower and lovelier features of the mighty scene; and the chill waste becomes *aired* by the warmth of human affections. Not only do we learn to people the fastnesses of nature with "imaginary puissance;" to feel in the huge breast of the mountain a sustaining power; to grasp on the verge of the black precipice a giddy joy; to recognise the spirit of loveliness subduing mere bleak sublimity to its uses; but the sense of other moments of precious experience heightens the present, and makes us feel *at home* in the wildest solitude. It is not necessary to this reduplication of sentiment and delight that the mind should be conscious of the scenes which have enriched it; the silent spirit of other days is near us unseen, and sheds an interest at once strange and familiar on objects upon which for the first time we gaze. By this cause alone can I explain the homefelt charm which always spreads delight over the mind on the view of the distant ocean, serene in some tranquil light. The object itself cold, desolate, vast, unbounded, restless,

ever-changing, can offer no material repose congenial to the world-vexed spirit; and yet, to me at least, it is never stretched out in soft blue, or flecked by clouds, or quivering in moonlight, without imparting a sense of home. This feeling—which I believe is common—can only be accounted for by the many half-forgotten hours in which the same great object has been gazed on, while a thousand serious though idle musings (all traced in the immortal Book of Memory) have attached themselves to its expanse, and are ever faintly reflected from the lonely tranquillity of the ocean field. I cannot, therefore, help thinking that, whatever may be the experience of the few who are endowed with insight into the mysteries of creation beyond their fellows, it is better for the mass—among whom I rejoice to believe the true love of external nature is largely diffused—to have that love first expanded and nurtured in youth among quiet scenes of English beauty; to trace back its throbbings to the time when the little school-boy, on his hard pillow, has half remembered, half dreamed of the fields and wood-walks he had carelessly paced in free childhood; and embracing them again with his holiday vision, has first felt that sweet faintness of the heart with which a recurrence to old scenes affects us; to embrace

by the light of that love the grander scenes of its own land; and after such cultivation and enjoyment in his own country, to enrich it with the mightier grandeur of Switzerland, or bathe the delighted spirit among the luxuries of Italy.

The ice-clad mountains, surveyed in the heat and blaze of summer, are so entirely unlike any appearances of earth we can behold in our own islands, that the Swiss scenery only becomes a fair subject of comparison with the British, when they are excluded from the prospect, as they often are, in the depths of successive valleys. In their absence, the advantage of the Swiss scenes will be found in their richer affluence of accompaniment; that of British, in that individuality of character which partly belongs to their own features, and partly consists in their aptitude for blending with the feelings and thoughts of him who loves them. In reflecting on the *unsnowed* valleys of Switzerland, we shall find that the difference in their favour does not consist of the mere superiority of elevation in the heights—from 8,000 to 10,000 feet on their average, above ours from 2,000 to 3,000—but of all the prodigal beauty which the greater elevations nurture,—the number and the power of the fountains which gush out from them; the groves that flash or



lower from their sides, giving you the sense at once of a hundred thickets ; the steps and turrets and acclivities of rocks, nurturing in their interstices breeze-sown clumps and festoons of wild flowers, each a fairy garden ; these spring and cluster and accumulate, in proportion as the mountain side which nourishes them, expands. So far is it from being true that, in nature, sublimity and beauty are commonly divorced, that experience will show that the first is almost always made up of the last ; the nobler the outline of the mountain, the more various and exquisite are the details of loveliness which fill it. Thus, in Switzerland, you have rarely to try to exalt objects in your thoughts by recollecting how many feet they rise above the level of the sea ; nor to endeavour to trace a faint outline of a distant height, as in Scotland and Wales ; everything around is vaster than your conception, and you almost grudge the excess of grandeur, which you feel, in some of its varieties, must escape even your memory. So you have never, when you visit a famous waterfall, to accept the apology of the guide for the absence of water—to hear grievous complaints of fantastic summer's heat—and to be convinced that the cascade is very fine when the weather is very wet ; on the contrary, the resources of the ice-born and ice-fed streams enable them

to maintain the delightful peculiarity of being most abundant when the sun's power is most supreme. Nothing in our home scenery even suggests the idea of a river like the Rhine; not only in the collected majesty of its German course, but in its bounteous azure above the fall at Schaffhausen, and the huge masses of radiant white which it pours over the rocks. So the Aar, the Limmat, the Lower Reuss, the Rhône as it gushes out of the Lake of Geneva in its short-lived purity, are not only superior to our rivers, but give an image of the lovely continuity of living water they never suggested even to a dream. Some of our rivers have, indeed, a character and charm of their own. The Severn glistening through the meadows above Shrewsbury so rapidly, in proportion to its strength, that you almost fancy it a torrent which is passing entirely away, is as different in spirit from the majestic movement of the Thames, which ripples among the osiers and circles round the water-lilies at Lechlade with a certain awful serenity which it never loses in its weed-obstructed and lily-crowned course, till it resigns its individuality to the tide,—as if the streams were not of the same element; so the Trent, the Clyde, the Forth, each has its own character; but none have a plenitude of water until

they become estuaries. Happily associated with this wealth of nature in Switzerland is the superior greenness preserved to late autumn; the exuberance of flowers; and the glory of orchards—making “Hesperian fables true—if true here only.” On the lakes alone, this prodigality of nature is unfelt; for the deep basin can only be full; and the simpler the accompaniments of a lake, the more perfect its impression. With the exception of the Lake of Wallenstadt, and probably the grander portion of the Lake of the Four Cantons, which I have not seen; I think the Swiss lakes inferior to those of Scotland and Westmoreland, in the proper attributes of their class;—nor do the Swiss mountains enclose basins so lovely as the tarns which, in deepest sable, lie embosomed in the folds of Loughrigg Fell, beneath the precipices of Cader Idris and Helvellyn, and the Langdale Pikes; and of which you may reckon twenty, even through the dividing mists from the top of Snowdon, each uplifted far among the hills, with its dark fortress of rock casting a congenial gloom over its black mirror.

Perhaps the superior riches with which the Swiss scenes are generally endowed, may supply one reason why ours are more capable of being grasped

by human affections; as wealth subsides into a vague notion when we cannot count it. But besides the circumstance that, in point of extent, our greatest mountains, and those most perfect in themselves, may be brought within the compass of a day's observation; they have a peculiarity of character which I have not felt in Switzerland, impressed on one circle of objects; with the exception of the ascent of the Ticino, and the valley of Chamouni. Of the four British mountains which possess the most powerful influence for the imagination—Snowdon, Cader Idris, Helvellyn, and Ben Nevis—each has its own attributes; and though in each the most striking feature is that of dark precipice, this is so differently exhibited in each, that if any one familiar with them all could see a single precipice apart from its accessories, he might tell to which mountain it belonged. Of these mountains Snowdon forms beyond comparison the noblest aggregate; because except on the side opposite Carnarvon, its upper portion is all mighty frame-work; a top uplifted on vast buttresses; disdaining the round lumpish earth, and spreading out skeleton arms towards heaven, and embracing on each side huge hollows, made more awful by the red tints of the copper ore which

deepens among its shadows, and gleams through the scanty herbage of its loveliest pathways*.

* Perhaps I love Snowdon the better on account of its being the first great mountain I ever knew. I have ascended it several times ;—from Capel-Carig, from Llanberis, and from Beddgelert ;—the last time on 1st October, 1839, from the latter place. I am tempted to extract the following account of my ascent, from some notes of an Autumn in Wales, made shortly afterwards, as a companion to my attempted descriptions of Continental scenery.

ASCENT OF SNOWDON.

The morning dawned misty yet promising, and I engaged a car to take me three miles on to the place where the ascent commences. As I rode on the Carnarvon road, speculating on the state of things in the higher regions, I observed a pinnacle shot out its head from the mist far into the sky. I asked my guide what height it was ;—I was told that it was the peak of Snowdon. Seen over the round breast of an intervening hill, it did not look higher than many other points, but was remarkable for its spiral form, and was surmounted, certainly not adorned, by what here appeared to be a little stick, but which is a great piece of timber stuck up in the midst of a heap of stones—all reared by order of the Government for a landmark—as if the mountain were not great enough without the addition of this Cockney crown ! We proceeded, keeping this tall head in view, till we reached a gate about three miles on the road, where we quitted the car and began the ascent. We now saw the whole of the south-east side of the mountain, which presented directly before us its second peak, with the highest just peering over it. Here the mountain did not, at first sight, appear high, not nearly so high as a slender rock we had passed—but on looking attentively at it, you could fancy it crouching to conceal its height. Its aspect was that of a stony hill, surmounted by a green shoulder, on which appeared a steep upward track, with a tall peak just peeping over the ridge, and beyond a long regular slant dark against the sky. We walked along a plashy path, very gently rising, to a farm house, passed through its yard, and continued by the side of a little stream, curving upwards through the dark rushy meadow, till we reached the first serious ascent among heaps of rocks, which bestrew the lower part of the hill. We

Cader Idris is a narrow ridge, upraised on one side on a line of precipices, wreathed up into

now began to feel ourselves rapidly rising, winding about among grass and pieces of rock, till we reached a great flat stone on which we rested, and the view from which was remarkable. Before us lay the simple unadorned lake of Bettwys, with its one great rock rising to shield it ; beyond, seen through two ranges of hill, the towers of Carnarvon Castle ; and below, but apparently quite close, Anglesea, seen mapped out to Holyhead. The sea spread its lovely blue on each side of Anglesea—but the Menai Straits were entirely hidden, and the effect was that of standing on a terrace of which the towers of Carnarvon formed the battlements, and looking directly down on a huge garden below. Hence ascending, we found the second peak rising far higher above us than the summit itself had appeared from the plain. A spring of clear, cold, exquisite water detained us a few minutes, as it is the highest on this side of the mountain. On the Capel-Carig side there is a spring not very far below the summit. Here I tasted the water, having prepared the way by a little brandy, with which the guide had taken care that we should be provided. Here we saw the sea in front as well as to the west, between the huge openings of the mountain, and looked into a great valley branching off in that direction to the sea, which contains two lakes within its depth, between which Wilson sat when drawing Snowdon. A little onward we reached the margin of the first great hollow of the mountain, not quite so grand as that below the summit of Cader,—holding three small pools, instead of (like that) one great tarn. Along the side-hollow, up the shining track, we now laboured, and found it by far the hardest work of the ascent, though not so hard as the Fox's Path of Cader. Having surmounted this stiff brae, we turned to the left under the second peak beside the precipice, and soon came to a ridge connecting it with the summit—the grandest part, by far, of the ascent. We now looked into a greater precipice on the opposite side—the greatest of all Snowdon's hollows—overshadowed by a shelf of rock of the boldest form, holding a little lake in its depth, and descending to a green ridge, over which the road from Beddgelert to Capel-Carig, in the vale of Gwynett, is seen, like a line of blue among the green. Beyond

pillared points, while on the other sides it presents a rounded mass ; and is, therefore, far inferior to

the upward ridge I had glimpses of a third hollow—that which is ascended from Capel-Carig—of the same character, but not quite so large. Hence the path to the summit was sometimes on one side the ridge, sometimes on the other, sometimes on its top ; but quite easy, and (in spite of the fables of guide-books, which talk about people dying with fright in it) quite safe. After about two hours and a half's walk from the road, we reached the summit, where I partook of some sandwiches and brandy-and-water with great relish. Here the mountain seems drawn to a point, as by five or six cords, shouldering to the plain ; and within these to embrace great hollows, more or less precipitous, with pools or tarns in their depths. Near the top it is a mere bunch of ridges, surmounted by one slender apex, defended by rocky fragments like huge tusks. Climbing the mound of stones, I saw the entire panorama, in its kind matchless, but not so grand as the lower view from the ridge connecting the second peak with the summit. To the west lay Anglesea, the sea beyond, and I thought I caught a glimpse of the Wicklow mountains. To the north Moel Siabod and the great mountains between Capel-Carig and the sea, forming the pass through which the road passes among great bare stony rocks glittering in the sun. To the south the mountains of Merioneth, among which Cader was easily to be distinguished, and for some minutes a gleam of light revealed the very side of its central precipices along which I had lately climbed, and beyond—blue in the distance—crouched Plinlimmon. To the east a wilderness of mountain, and round at least two-thirds of the view the blue ocean poured, as round the shield of Achilles. The most remarkable feature of this great prospect is the mountain tarns, which gleam upon you from the bosoms of the hills. I counted twenty-three. Among them, one very far up its own mountain, gleamed out as from a brimming basin, over the Holyhead road, just visible in its huge bed of rock, at least 1500 feet above the neighbouring track of human traffic. I remained on the summit nearly an hour, during which time I was joined by a young friend and two ladies, who had ascended from Llanberris. On the descent we walked over the crown of the second peak, whence, and from the ridge, the

Snowdon in outline ; but its summit overlooks a greater and more awful tarn than Snowdon upholds, and it has one scene just behind and a little below its summit—a small tarn lying beneath a huge rock, sometimes called the *Crater of Cader*, which is more impressive than any sequestered scene in Snowdon. The one rock which shades it rises into a solemn peak, like the top of a Gothic arch of the broadest kind, and is covered with lichens and mosses of dark shaggy green—rendering the sense of antiquity more palpable by a natural venerableness than it is in thunder-riven stone. Helvellyn rises in gentle pastoral swell also to the brink of deep precipices—not expanded as those of Cader in a straight line, but following the curve of a series of coves, divided from each other by descending ledges, one of fearful narrowness called Striden Edge ; the others forming huge solid buttresses of stone, intermingled with short grass and coarse rushes. Ben Nevis, by far the loftiest *, is a vast bulk, starting almost regularly

view is really nobler than from the summit, because the neighbouring mountains are seen in nobler proportion. The distances, never very clear, grew more hazy ; but they are never very important in mountain prospects. The guide offered to take me down into the Vale of Gwynett, through the great hollow ; but I declined, fearing the wetness of the ground, and thinking the usual descent sufficiently grand ; and so it was.

* This mountain, after retaining for ages the supremacy for height among British hills, has been recently despoiled of its

to the top, except on the north-east side, where he, too, has his precipice—but differing wholly in character from those of Snowdon, Cader Idris, or Helvellyn; it deeply indents the mountain edge, as it rises with a succession of narrow openings, almost like chimneys, supported by huge pillars, till it reaches the height of 1500 feet at the summit from the upland valley which forms its base; and seen from the bottom, is of fearful blackness. Our noblest mountain passes have, like our mountains, a distinct character impressed upon them; that of Llanberris, for example, though it might be described by the same general attributes, is as essentially different from that of Kirkstone, as a pastoral valley is from a stony defile; while that of Glencoe not only surpasses all others in the British isles in grandeur and extent, but stands apart in the mind, as of another order of sublimity, as if it belonged to a different world. Its serrated ridge on one side, terminating in huge slaty declivities of glittering sable, in the expansion of its opening gorge, and its huge round masses of rock on the other, looking as if bowed down by some awful pressure from beneath

sovereignty by measurements, which are said to have ascertained that Ben Mac Dui in Aberdeenshire is a few feet higher. After this, what security have we for any glory of this world

the snow-cleft of Mount Bedin, require no story of treacherous murder to make it the most fearful of earthly scenes. In Switzerland the tourist will traverse many rock-walled valleys, the sides of which rise up to twice the elevation of its highest ridges, as in the road from Chamouni, below the Buet to the Tête Noire ; but none of these will ever displace Glencoe from its solemn station in the memory.

The scenery of North Wales has a nearer affinity to that of Switzerland than any other in Britain. It has no scenes so mighty as some in the Highlands of Scotland ; but the blending of the features of beauty and grandeur is more frequent and more perfect in Wales. There, some of the valleys, as, for example, that of Gwynett, on the east side of Snowdon, which seen from the top of the Pass of Llanberris, with the peak of Mount Siabod in front, might be taken for a miniature of the grandest Swiss scenery, not crowned by the icy pinnacles. The scenery of the English Lakes excels both and all, in the extraordinary variety it comprises of the noble and the lovely, within a compass which the mind is capable of grasping ; and which the eye may drink in, during one autumn day. Indeed, one beautiful piece of upland, Loughrigg Fell, might seem a platform—if such a phrase did not belie its

waving, rock-ribbed, and pinnaced surface—built by Nature, to enable her true lovers to enjoy, in quick succession, the most splendid variety she can exhibit. On one side, from the gently ascending path, bordered by scanty heather, you embrace the broader portion of Windermere, spreading out its arms as if to embrace the low and lovely hills that enfold it—a view without an angle or a contrast—a scene of perfect harmony and peace. Ascend a lofty slab of rock, not many paces onward, and you have lying before you the delicious vale of the Rotha—a stream gliding through the greenest meadows—with Fairfield beyond, expanding its huge arms as of a giant's chair, and with Fox How in the midst, where the great and good Dr. Arnold—great in goodness—embraced the glories of the external world, with all the earnestness of his generous and simple nature, and nourished that sense of the imaginative and harmonious aspects of humanity and faith which grew clearer and deeper as he advanced in years. Wind your way through two small valleys, each having its own oval basin, and from another height you may look down on the still mirror of Rydalmere, with its small central island, the nest of herons; and following the valley to Grasmere with its low white church-tower, beyond the figured crest of Heln Crag, behold the

vast triangle of Skiddaw filling the distance ; while midway, just rising above green mountains, you may see the topmost *rind* of Helvellyn, curved in air, with one black descent just indicated ; and, when the eye has been satiated with loveliness, look down just below on a mansion at the foot of Nab Scar, the dwelling of the Poet, not of these only, but of all earth's scenes ; who, disdaining the frequent description of particular combinations of its beauties, has unveiled the sources of profoundest sentiment they contain ; and, more than any writer who ever lived, has diffused that love of external nature which now sheds its purifying influence abroad among our people. Pass from thence to the highest point of all this region, and look down, beyond the calm round tarn of Loughrigg, into a magnificent chaos, the Langdale vales, with the ribbed pike of Scawfel beyond them, and in the midst those Pikes, which, yielding to many of the surrounding hills in height, surpass them all in form ; and if here they shall seem diminished by the presence of loftier objects, call to mind their aspect in a scene you now overlook, and to which an hour's walk may bring you—one like none other in the world ; place yourself near the lonely cottage in which Wordsworth's Solitary dwelt, by the side of Blea Tarn, where you can see nothing

but the bold opening of the upland valley, between two russet slopes, and the mass which completely fills it—the Langdale Pikes, with the Gimmer Crag between, rising from the unseen floor of the lower vale, an enormous cathedral of nature, sustained by huge swelling columns, rising into a cone on one side, a tower in front, and a mass of pinnacles on the other extremity ; alone, perfect, of one colour—of brownish stone, shaded by the green of a million showers ! Does the experience which the eye and the heart acquire among larger scenes in Switzerland detract from the enjoyment of these ? No : on the contrary, the education both have received there, prepares them for a keener perception of these the grandeurs of our English home ; while the very comparison which they provoke enriches and multiplies the associations of which our own scenery is suggestive.

But the snowy mountains—the higher Alps—what shall be said of them ! That they disturb the mind with a new sensation, which, when its first perplexity is removed, is pure and elevating, cannot be doubted ; but they can never take a hold on human feelings, at least in proportion to their greatness. The reason is, that being, for the most part, far beyond the reach of mortal

steps, and incapable of ever becoming the scenes of human passions, loves, joys, and sorrows, the mind cannot acquire familiarity with them, except as they may receive and reflect the influences of the atmosphere and the heavens. You cannot imbue their peaked tops or glistening slants with the earnestness of thought, or trace in them symbols of the history of man, or of the tragedy of his life, as in the rocks and caverns, and forests of the earthy mountains. For the same reason, the neighbourhood of these splendid pinnacles does not oppress the stranger like that of the brown precipices and dark rocks of inferior hills ; for the mind has no cue which compels it to try to understand them—no imperfect sympathy with them to disturb it; and is contented to wonder. They are, on this outward world, to the masses of unsnowed matter, what the Arabian Tales are to the epic and the tragic in literature—they are the cold romance, the graceful extravagance, the visionary speculations of nature — a miracle tinged by the skies, as wild fiction is by aerial fancy. The very contradiction in feeling which the presentment of huge fields of snow to the blazing sun implies ; though implying, also, the sublimity of height ; more resembles the greatest efforts of the fancy, than of the imagination, which

deals not with strange coincidences, but with elemental truths. The snowy region is the region of enchantment, in which "no touch of nature makes the whole world kin," but in which the powers of nature are strangely constrained and fantastically disposed. If Lord Byron, in those celebrated lines on the Alps, in which he represents nature as having "throned eternity in icy halls of cold sublimity," meant to imply that permanence belongs to their icy palaces, the sentiment is the reverse of true; desolation is the only active power among them; and the exquisite beauties of the snow-caves are more fragile than the spider's web,—changed, vanishing, renewed, in a thousand delicacies of ice in every summer's day, and the night which follows it. The river which issues, in triumphant life, from the foot of the glacier, seems like one of the fabled knights breaking from the chains of some long enchantment, and rioting in the sense of regained natural power. While, therefore, the snowy mountains form a new and most glorious spectacle, which frequent visits will expand and heighten, the heart will not cleave to them as to scenes it can people with kindred associations; but they will be regarded with a feeling of admiring delight, something between the affection with which we embrace

the earth from which they are uplifted, and that mere transient admiration we feel while we watch the clouds with which they mingle.

And yet, contented as I am to enjoy the recollections of Switzerland among the scenes of Britain, there is one place, of all I have gazed on, which I would still hope to revisit. Need I add, that is the valley of Chamouni? Here objects which are most allied to those I first knew and loved, in the softest inland scenery of England, border on the region of the most fantastic glory. Here may an Englishman, thus country-bred, pace the narrow field walks, and muse over the bright stubbles after harvest, awake to all the recollections of childhood—or feel them indistinctly lying at his heart; and then, raising his eyes, revel in the light visions which swarm among the airy heights. To know yet more of Mont Blanc, not again by a vain attempt to reach its summit, but by following some of the lower paths which glisten in the splendid work of Professor Forbes; to penetrate to the Jardin; to ascend the Bréven and the Buet; and to gaze on the great mountain from the Vale of Aosta, are still things to dream of; and, parting now from the attempt to retrace my steps on the Continent, with a grateful sense of all I have enjoyed there, I will not abandon the

hope, that before the close of that glorious apprenticeship to beauty and grandeur which we are privileged to serve in this beautiful world, I may once more find myself in the full view of Mont Blanc at St. Martin, and again awake its echoes by that most delightful of all travelling requisitions—
TWO CHARS A-BANC FOR CHAMOUNI !

THE END.









